



Respectful Relationships

Pasifika people living our values

This factsheet is part of a [series of helpful information](#) on how to maintain respectful relationships while navigating stressful times.

Crisis events, like a pandemic, a troubled economy, or increasingly common severe weather events, can lead to stress for many of us. This can put extra strain on our relationships at home. Lots of people may be experiencing higher than usual levels of stress during these times.

It is normal for people to be experiencing issues and frustrations in their relationship when they are stressed. For Pasifika families and communities, one way to ensure we are maintaining respectful relationships is to remember our cultural values and put them into practice.

Key Messages

- The **va** (relationship) between people is sacred for Pasifika people
- When we apply our values to the way we act towards others, our relationships flourish
- When we hurt and disrespect our loved ones, we harm the **va** in our home
- It is important to remember there are ways to repair the **va** and bring it back to a healthy state
- If relationships are unhealthy and/or abusive, we should reach out and seek support outside of our household.

The Va

People need relationships to survive and thrive. Both research and experience have shown us that when we have supportive relationships in our lives, we are more likely to feel better and do better. As with all collective cultures, having good relationships is important for Pasifika people.

Traditionally, many Pasifika cultures believe that we are connected to everything around us. This is best explained using the concept of **va**.

Va refers to “the space between”. When it comes to relationships between people, **the va** refers to the relational space that connects us.

The relational spaces between people within our family (or household) are sacred. These sacred relationships exist between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, older and younger siblings, friends and extended family members. We need to look after and nurture these relationships.

The practice of **nurturing the va** is valued within traditional Pasifika cultures. How well we nurture this space or the **va** reflects on the overall wellbeing of our relationships.



Nurturing the Va by living our Pasifika values

When we show our values in the way we talk, act and treat each other, we nurture the **va**. When we live by our values, we also feel better about ourselves and our wellbeing flourishes. When we are aggressive towards others, it goes against our cultural values. **#ViolencelsNotOurCulture**.

Below are some common Pasifika cultural values and some helpful tips and examples on how to show your values.

Values	Bringing your values to life	Examples
<p>Family</p> 	<p>Think of ways you can make your family a priority.</p> <p>Be present and give your family your full attention when it is family time.</p> <p>If you're feeling frustrated or angry, don't take it out on other people in your home. Learn how to #CatchYourself before things get out of hand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up quality time with your family each day. Turn off your cell phones, iPads, laptops etc. and give your family your full attention. • If possible, talk to employers about how you might change your work schedule to care for your family. • Plan some fun family activities to do every night to bond e.g. board games, karaoke, zumba, cards.
<p>Love</p> 	<p>Think about how your actions can show how much you care for others in your household.</p> <p>Think before you act and consider the feelings of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell your family you love them. • Check in on the wellbeing of the people you live with. Hug your children if they are feeling overwhelmed or sad. • Write a list of all the things you love about the different members of your household and share over dinner or put the note on your fridge for people to see. • Help around the house, without being asked. • Make a meal for your family.
<p>Respect</p> 	<p>Remember that all people are of value and deserve to be treated with respect.</p> <p>It's normal for people to have different opinions, and being respectful means being ok with this.</p> <p>Learn how to talk and listen better in our tips on maintaining relationships</p>	<p>When others are talking, listen to understand. Let them finish talking without interrupting them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to each other in a respectful way when you get into disagreements (don't raise your voice or use a sarcastic tone). • Respect each other's belongings and space. Ask before using other people's stuff or going into their room.

Service



In Pasifika cultures, service is valued and seen as a sign of respect and leadership.

Serving and helping others in your home helps the overall wellbeing of your household.

- For young people, helping parents out with chores and cooking is a great way to show service.
- You can show service by posting positive messages to your family and friends on social media.
- Help others connect - teach family members how to use technology such as facetime or zoom so they can connect with other friends and loved ones.

Reciprocity



Sharing the responsibility for tasks can build teamwork at home. Doing fun things that involve working together can be a great way to start.

Notice when kindness has been shown to you and try to pass this on

- Do things together such as cooking and baking, weeding the garden, folding and putting away the washing.
- Each day do one nice thing for another person you live with e.g. make breakfast, share TV or PlayStation, make someone's bed, give up the last cookie for your brother or sister.
- Take turns at doing chores around the house so that one person is not doing it all e.g. one person cooking and another washing the dishes.

Spirituality



Connecting spiritually is good for your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your loved ones.

Spirituality can look different for different people. What's important is that you do what feels right for you.

- Pray together.
- Meditate.
- Connect by going for a walk together and connecting with nature.
- Spend time with your loved ones reading the bible. Bible stories also teach about the values of love, service, honour and respect.
- Tune in to digital platforms.
- Spend quality time alone with God.



Put your values into action!

Plan how you can show your cultural values in your relationships. Fill in the **values statement** alone or do it together with your family. Put this up somewhere visible and review it to see how you are doing.

My values	Actions I will take to show this value with people in my home	When will I do this?	Things that might stop me from doing this action. (Barriers)	How will I overcome barriers?
e.g. Family	Spend more fun time together	Games night - Wednesdays	Distracted by other things	Set a time and stick to it! Reward ourselves for completing the games

When the Va is harmed

We all experience stress and strain in our relationships. If we don't do anything to make it better, this can cause long term harm to our wellbeing and our relationships.

When we hurt and disrespect people we care about, we harm the **va** or our relationships.

It is normal to have disagreements. It is important to remember there are ways to repair the va and bring it back to a healthy state.

What can I do?

Lots of people may experience higher than usual levels of stress during crisis events.

[So how do we stop things from getting out of hand?](#)



Sometimes we may not “catch ourselves” in time, and act in ways that upset or harm others. If this happens, we need to repair our relationships back to a healthy state. Here are some tips:

- If you need to, apologise with sincerity. Say the words, “I’m sorry”.
- If you’ve made a mistake, admit to it and try and make things right.
- Offer to do something that will make the other person feel better.
- Try to see the other person’s perspective, even if you don’t agree.

When the bubble bursts

Respect is at the centre of healthy relationships. When this is missing our relationships can become unhealthy and even abusive. If relationships are unhealthy and/or abusive, we should reach out and seek support outside of our home (see contact details below for free advice and support).

There is help available for those who are suffering from abuse of any kind. There is also help available for those who are hurting or abusing others. We don’t have to suffer in silence.

In healthy relationships, each person respects the other person. But sometimes our behaviour towards others can be unhealthy, or even abusive. For some of us, it’s not easy to know what behaviours in a relationship are unhealthy. Check out below for some examples.



Healthy

Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect. Healthy actions include:

- Feeling safe to share honest thoughts and feelings
- Valuing each other’s differences
- Trusting one another



Unhealthy

Unhealthy relationships happen when respectful connections begin to fade. Actions can include:

- Not valuing the other person’s opinions and goals
- Not giving the other person space to do their own things
- Ignoring each other



Abusive

In abusive relationships, there is no respect. Abusive actions can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial and spiritual. Abusive actions can include:

- Threatening words and actions
- Put-downs
- Violence, including smacking, hitting, pushing and throwing things
- Forcing another person to perform sexual acts

People on the receiving end of these behaviours can feel scared, alone, trapped, ashamed or whakamā, and feel they cannot tell others. It’s important to know that it is not your fault and that there is help available.



More support



auntydee.co.nz



mentalwealth.nz



atumai.nz



leva.co.nz

If you need to talk to someone now

Help is always available. Reach out if you are feeling unsafe or if you, or someone close to you, is finding it difficult to manage their anger. Check out the information below.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call the Police on **111**, even if you're not sure.

1737

Free call or text **1737**. Kiwis feeling down can talk to a trained counsellor for free.

1737

0800 HeyBro

(0800 439 276) - Keeping Whānau Safe: We're here to support Men 24/7 to listen and to help. So give us a call next time you're on the edge!

Women's Refuge

free call **0800 733 843** (0800 REFUGE) for 24-hour service advocacy and accommodation for women and their children experiencing family violence

Youthline

Call **0800 376 633**, free text **234**, or email talk@youthline.co.nz

Elder Abuse Helpline

Call **0800 32 668 65** (0800 EA NOT OK). 24-hour service answered by registered nurses

Tu Wahine Trust

Call **09 838 8700** for kaupapa Māori counselling, therapy and support for survivors of sexual harm (mahi tukino) and violence within whānau

Preventing violence by supporting families to have respectful relationships
www.atumai.nz

Equipping young people to look after their mental health
www.mentalwealth.nz

Growing the Pasifika mental health & addiction workforce
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/mental-health

Improving the quality of health services through cultural competency
www.leva.co.nz/training-education/engaging-pasifika

Enhancing mental health literacy in online gaming
www.manarestore.nz

Igniting community collaboration for wellbeing solutions
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/gps-satellite-seminars

Supporting community-based suicide prevention for Pasifika families
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/suicide-prevention

Equipping all New Zealanders with skills to prevent suicide
www.lifekeepers.nz

Fostering te ao Māori approaches to suicide prevention training
www.lifekeepers.nz

Championing equity for Pasifika people with disabilities
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/disability-support/faiva-ora-leadership

Shaping resiliency in young people with digital mental health tools
www.auntydee.co.nz

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#CatchYourself | Respect your village

Le Va

Faka'ita fai ki tahi

Do not let anger rule
your judgement



#CatchYourself | *Respect your village*