



WELLELDER

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A community trust providing specialist counselling for older people from Wellington through to Kāpiti

Decreasing Mobility

Throughout our lives, most of us are accustomed to being active enough to look after ourselves – dress, wash, make a cuppa. Many of us also expect to be active enough to get out and about to work, visit, volunteer, help with family, go to events, garden and maintain our expected lifestyle.

As get older we gradually get used to being a bit slower, taking more care and doing less, and many of us stay active, and expect to, all our lives.

But an injury or illness can have major impacts on our mobility, and may be very challenging to adjust to. This can be short term – such as a broken bone; or a chronic or debilitating illness such as arthritis or motor neurone disease.

It can be intensely frustrating not to be able to do things we have always taken for granted, and hard to learn 'ways around' how to manage in drastically changed circumstances.

Practically it can become difficult to look after ourselves – we may need help from others for all sorts of tasks and every day living. Asking for, and accepting help, either from professional care givers or family members /friends, is another hard lesson to learn.

We suffer a sense of lost opportunities and missing out on things we have always enjoyed and expected to be able to do.

Finding other ways to fill our time, being part of social activities, ways to relax and be part of the world around us can be challenging.



WellElder provides low cost counselling for older people

In 2017 we held 989 individual counselling sessions and ran 36 group sessions for 290 clients.

- *We rely on a DHB contract to help fund our counselling services.*
- *We ask clients to contribute towards the cost of counselling as they can, from \$10.*
- *Donations and additional funding are necessary to cover the full cost.*

Anxiety about the future and what it will hold, what the implications are for us, can feel overwhelming,

These are all very natural reactions to a wide range of circumstances which lead to decreasing mobility, and ones we are often aware of in our counselling work with older people.

When we slow down we start to notice new things, and savour and enjoy life in different ways

It will be different for everyone for many reasons, and bottling up frustrations and anxieties, or soldiering on, is not the only possible response.

Being able to voice how physical changes impact on you is a starting point, describing and talking about what you are experiencing will help to see it more clearly, and lead to understanding how to manage.

There are a number of practical things that are important. Ensure your environment is as safe and helpful as it can be – ramps, handles, no loose rugs, and good sturdy stair rails are the kind of things that will assist at home. Don't delay in finding out and setting up what will work for you.

Learn to slow down and appreciate the here and now of the world and relationships you have. When we slow down we start to notice new things, and savour and enjoy life in different ways. It's about not packing in as much as possible – but to nurture pleasures and enjoy the detail in life and find how to be creative in other ways.

Learning to accept help is important. Finding ways to ask for the help you need, rather than wait until you are desperate, or are having to manage unwelcome assistance is an art that needs to be developed.

Finding ways to live with decreased mobility is always a challenging process, and is one where counselling can significantly help. At WellElder we are available for people over 60 years old (55 if Maori or Pacifica) for confidential, professional counselling – we can be contacted directly on 04 380 2440, or through our website

www.wellelder.nz.

Become part of the WellElder community in Wellington.... 

Signup for information and invitations to events to support WellElder

Name: _____ Email: _____

Donate to us at 94 Riddiford Street Newtown, or by direct debit to bank account 06-0574-0223422-00 (ANZ Kilbirnie)

We are a registered charity (CC31682) – Your donations are tax deductible