



WELLELDER

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

The Art of Accepting Help

None of us are ever totally independent – although we all value our independence and rarely take time to appreciate the web of relationships around us that sustain who we are. In our families and living situations we frequently rely on each other for daily issues such as paying bills, sharing household tasks, communications with each other.

As we age, the balance of these tasks inevitably changes, and older people cannot manage physical and sometimes cognitive tasks – and will need to find ways to get these things done.

Such tasks as housework, gardening, shopping, paying bills, arranging tradesman and maintaining social relationships and activities all change depending on circumstances, sometimes quickly and sometimes over time. Coming to terms with changes and developing ways to manage them is something that counselling can frequently assist with.

There are several stages in learning how to accept help with grace and dignity, and it is certainly a creative process, an art, rather than a straightforward issue.

It is natural to avoid or minimise difficulties we have, but facing up to them and being aware of what we have difficulty with is an essential step. We will find it very difficult to accept help if we haven't accepted we need it, and at the same time can make life difficult for everyone around us if we try to struggle on long past the point at which it is obvious to others that we could do with help.



There will be things you can do to help yourself by reducing risks and managing differently as your abilities change. Cues such as writing lists, ensuring your home is as organised as you need it, creating patterns and habits for things such as taking medications, preparing meals are the kind of practical things that are very useful.

WellElder provides low cost counselling for older people

In 2018 we held 989 individual counselling sessions and ran 47 group sessions for 317 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.*

Then there will be things that you can identify that you do need help with. Housework, gardening shopping are tasks that others can do for you. Either family or friends, or home help are the immediate avenues for assistance.

Home help can be arranged privately through a number of agencies, or through an assessment by the DHB which your GP can arrange. There is a fee for private agencies, but home support assessed by the DHB is provided as part of public health service. Contacting these agencies will help with assessing what you can do for yourself and where help would be most useful.

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Be as specific as possible – frequently family and friends are willing to help, but don't know where to start. So think about what you would like assistance with, and be clear when talking to either family, friends or agencies about what this is.

Do not be afraid of saying if it doesn't help – remember this is to assist you and you need to be the judge of that.

Consider what you can give in return. A smile is never wasted, and thanks is always appreciated. There may be items you want to pass on, gifts you can give such as lemons or flowers from your garden, or help with mending or knitting or something others don't have time to do themselves.

This will change with time and circumstances. If we reduce our anxiety or worry about things we can often operate better. As we age further, we may need help with more tasks. Stay aware of your circumstances and find ways to express what is happening for you.

Older people often come to us for counselling who have never had counselling before and we are aware that contacting us is a courageous and major initial step. It is a step into the unknown, and the prospect of talking about oneself to a stranger can be difficult to imagine. We understand this, and know that sharing a burden, and having time to consider and reflect on ones own circumstances, can have major benefits when times are tough and we are managing unwelcome changes.

We are here for those tough times - WellElder is a counselling service in Wellington Porirua and Kapiti for people over 60 (or 55 if Maori or Pacifica). You can contact s directly at 04 380 2440 or through our website at 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