

## Introduction

Over the last three decades, there has been a substantial rise in youth suicide rates internationally (World Health Organisation, 2018). Alarming, Ministry of Health records estimate that over 500 New Zealander's took their own lives in 2016 (Ministry of Health, 2016). New Zealand's youth suicide rate is now sadly ranked as one of the highest among developed nations (World Health Organisation, 2018). Perhaps of greatest concern is that these high suicide statistics only provide an indication of circumstances that have ended fatally, failing to account for non-fatal suicide attempts or the degree to which our communities suffer from mental health issues.

## Main themes

Many of the research I came across showed a theme, which suggested that youth suicidality could be avoided if intervention was implemented early on

Self-care is an integral part of daily life and is all about individuals taking responsibility for their own health and well being (Anae, Moewaka, McCreanor & Watson, 2002).

Education around these self-care strategies gives the individual options of coping mechanisms. When young individuals are taught strategies to correctly handle stress, such as mindfulness, it can often lead to either externalised or internalised behaviours and these behaviors dictate how they handle diversity and other situations later in life (J. M., & Lau, M. A. 2000).

# Improving the mental health of New Zealand's youth population

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## Recommendations

New Zealand's health professionals are in good position to educate and reinforce the implementation both internal and external self-care strategies however, because health professionals in a hospital setting are not always the first point of contact my recommendation would be for mental health teams to broaden their education range and to liaise with other educational areas such as schools and do all we can, to promote the importance of self-care.

## Research Question

"What self-care strategies can nurses educate New Zealand's youth population on, that may complement conventional treatments, in order to improve their mental well-being status and increase their quality of life?"



## Five benefits of self-caring through meditation and exercise

1. Self-empowerment and a significant improvement of self-esteem
2. Positive alteration of mood and anxiety disorders
3. Acute reductions in anger and patients were able to develop a long-term tolerance to frustration1.
4. Allows for the disengagement of dysfunctional thinking patterns
5. Reduction of tendency to react to negative behaviors through mindfulness practice



## References

- Anae, M., Moewaka Barnes, H., McCreanor, T., & Watson, P. (2002). Towards promoting youth mental health in Aotearoa/New Zealand: holistic 'houses' of health. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 4(2), 5-14.
- J. M., & Lau, M. A. (2000). Prevention of relapse/recurrence in major depression by mindfulness-based cognitive therapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 615-625.
- World Health Organisation, (2018). *Suicide data*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/)



PECOT category	Information relating to question	Rationale
Population	Youth aged between 15-24 years old.	NZ youth suicide rates are ranked the highest among other developed countries. This age group are more newly exposed to various physical and psychological changes
Exposure (intervention)	Youth that participated in self care strategies in adjunction to conventional treatments	I will review research that used experimental design in which physical exercise and mindfulness and was appropriately used in practice e.g. mental health facilities.
Comparison/control	Youth who received clinical treatments or no treatment at all	I am interested to see the effectiveness of holistic approaches such as physical exercise and mindfulness has on NZ's youth population and whether it has a reduction effect on suicidal behaviour.
Outcome	Higher of lower rates of suicide and self-harm and change in quality of life between those who have knowledge around self-care strategies, and those who don't.	I am hoping to find out the effectiveness of self-care education on our youth and if there is a chance in reducing the suicide rates by implementing these.

Time	No set timeframe – the goal is too improve the mental well being of NZ's male youth population using holistic practices in addition to conventional treatments.	N/A
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#### Rationale:

As the topic of mental health can often be quite a confronting and uncomfortable topic for youth, I decided that the most effective way to present this research was through the form of a poster which will be accessible through the Otago Polytechnic Evidence Based Practice Forum. "Posters, done well, can provide a creative, eye-catching and quite detailed means of communicating research findings" (Whitehead & Schnieder, 2013b, p.385). Because of the age group my research focused on I believe having a visual presentation would allow for the most engagement and hopefully open a platform for discussion around the issue, ideas and shared problem solving for the future. As the literature did not conclusively reveal the efficacy of self-care strategies on youth's mental health due to a lack of satisfactory research available, a government submission would not be appropriate.

#### References:

Whitehead, D. & Schneider, Z. (2013b). *Writing and presenting research findings For dissemination*. In Z. Schneider, D. Whitehead, G. Lobiodo-Wood & J. Haber (Eds.). *Nursing and midwifery research methods for appraisal for Evidence based practice*. (4<sup>th</sup> Eds.). Australia: Elsevier.