

# Volunteering & the Five Ways to Wellbeing

There's a lot of research behind the idea that staying busy, maintaining social connections and finding purpose in our daily routine all support healthy mental wellbeing. Being a volunteer keeps us active and engaged in our community, and stretches us to expand our horizons and learn things about ourselves. Getting involved doesn't have to be complicated, and it doesn't have to take hours of your precious time.

## FIVE WAYS, FIVE REASONS TO GET INVOLVED

### **Connect** — *Me whakawhanaunga* *Be there for others, build strong relationships.*

Strong relationships with others — including in your volunteer space — are an essential part of building resilience and boosting wellbeing.

#### **How does volunteering help me Connect?**

- Being there for others strengthens your own relationships.
- Volunteering expands your social circle by bringing you alongside others you may not usually interact with.
- When you're part of a volunteer team, you're presented with opportunities to talk and connect with new people.

### **Keep Learning** — *Me ako tonu* *Be curious and seek out new experiences.*

Being curious and seeking new experiences in your work, volunteer space and life more generally positively stimulates the brain.

#### **How does volunteering help me Keep Learning?**

- Volunteers gain experiences that help them grow and upskill, which can in turn be used to help others.
- As a volunteer, you get to do things you've never done before — for an organisation you might not have known even existed.
- Donating your existing skills and strengths to a charity group can help you rediscover old interests or passions.

## **Be Active** — *Me kori tonu*

*Do regular physical activity that you enjoy.*

Being physically active improves physical health and can improve mood and wellbeing, while decreasing stress, depression and anxiety.

### **How does volunteering help me Be Active?**

- Spending time volunteering can be part of your regular physical activity routine.
- Many volunteer roles let you combine healthy practices with volunteering — think community gardens, clean-up events, or packing food parcels.
- Volunteering keeps your brain active and engaged, and is part of a healthy body.

## **Give** — *Tukua*

*Carry out acts of kindness, whether small or large.*

Carrying out acts of kindness can increase happiness, life satisfaction and your general sense of wellbeing.

### **How does volunteering help me Give?**

- Gifting your time helps charities and community groups carry out their vital role in society.
- Performing a random act of kindness for someone else can change that person's day — or life.
- Volunteering and generosity results in a sense of joy and satisfaction within yourself.

## **Take Notice** — *Me aro tonu*

*Appreciate the world around you.*

Paying more attention to the present moment — to your thoughts, feelings and the world around you — can boost your wellbeing.

### **How does volunteering help me Take Notice?**

- Helping others less fortunate can increase your own gratitude.
- Volunteering leads to a greater appreciation of the world around you.
- Doing something meaningful with your time helps you savour the moment.

## **Ready to make your mahi have meaning?**

Volunteering Canterbury can help you find a role that fits your time, interests and wellbeing.

[volcan.org.nz](https://volcan.org.nz)