



Mental Health Awareness Week - Workplace Challenge

Lakes DHB – Rotorua Hospital Outpatients Department



The excitement grew in the weeks leading up to this week. There was much talk about what we could do, get involved in and how we would decorate our space. These conversations alone were fantastic for our team bonding and subsequently our mental health. What a natural way to start off our first focus; whakananaugatanga.

We all agreed to take a daily brisk stroll to the Rotorua Lake and back at morning tea. An alarm was set and we encouraged each other to take part even if we were “too busy”; the saying went “you are never too busy for your mental health”. On our travels we collected various items for the office like pinecones, flowers and stones. It was a great opportunity to realise the beauty we are so lucky to be surrounded by every day!

We don't have windows in our office so we set about bringing nature in.

We learnt that many of us share the green thumb and were able to bring in some stunning plants from home. What's more, learning about nature was effortless; we shared knowledge of plants and brought in seedlings and cuttings from the garden to share, and another brought in a gardening book for us to pour over with a cuppa tea. We all had a good laugh when our Orthopaedic administrator brought in a garden statue of a dog we named “Ortho” after his speciality Orthopaedics.



We also made signs representing our specialities with beautiful nature background and we were surprised at how happy these pictures alone made us feel. It really has made a difference to the feel in our office. Before it was stagnant and now it feels alive!

continued



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Naturally, we all started to take notice of what we could see, hear, taste and smell. We had essential oil soaked napkins and were surprised at how a change in smell can bring a feeling of being grounded, "a snap back to reality" as one staff called it. When we stare at a screen all day the slightest change in smell can make an enormous difference to how we feel! A bag of lemons was donated and what a treat it was to have one on our desk to smell (and use as a stress ball when needed), and one was turned into a happy face which was a great laugh.



We took the "be active" challenge quite literally and signed up for the Ekiden Relay race around Lake Rotorua on Saturday 12/11/2018 where we will dress as mini mice (hence the costumes in the team photo taken today). Our patients in the waiting room found this a hoot and it was a great way to have a brief and friendly conversation about what mental health week is all about.

The Hospital also organised events for us to participate in and we really enjoyed the Tai Chi and Yoga at lunch time J. The Give challenge we realised we are achieving daily! Our team is passionate about recycling, upcycling and protecting nature. To up our game we removed the plastic cups and cutlery from the staff room, we print less where we can and some have even gone Vegan!

We thank the Mental Health Foundation for organising such a great event. It has made an enormous difference to how we view our team, how we view our lives and what is important to us.