



# Advice for principals and Teachers

## 1. Look after yourselves and each other

- You are not super-human. While your personal losses might not seem as extreme as those from an earthquake or tsunami, you will have lost your ideas of safety and security - as well as some of your freedoms and regular activities. You might have been ill, know someone who has been ill or even know someone who has died from the virus. You are allowed to take time to process what has happened and to reflect or grieve as necessary.
- This is shaping up to be a very stressful time. Sooner or later, you will need to stop and take stock of the emotional and physical toll. Some of you will bury yourselves in your work; others will find that the strain of managing multiple expectations is too much. Everyone will have different strengths and limits. Don't be quick to judge. Each of you will need to find your own coping strategies and support mechanisms.
- Don't be too hard on yourself or others. Reach out for help and be compassionate towards your colleagues. Because we are all in our bubbles, you may not be aware of all the issues in someone else's life. These events might bring up issues from the past, meaning some people are struggling in ways that you might not always know about.
- At this time, we are all tuning into news broadcasts to catch up with the latest figures or reading endless social media posts. This is not always helpful. Try to limit your viewing to essential information or accurate websites. Check the facts and sources before you re-post or tell others. There has already been confusion spread by well-meaning people who have not taken the time to check the credibility of the claims or sources.



*Helping teachers work with children when they first return to school following major traumatic or life-changing events*

- There is no magic bullet for getting us all through this pandemic. Social, emotional, educational and economic recovery will be a long journey but here are things that principals and teachers in on-going and post-disaster zones found helpful:
  - Checking in with each other so that you can share experiences, give appropriate support and organise help if needed.
  - Taking stock of the school's students and families so that principals and teachers have a sense of what is happening with individual students and their families.
  - Having regular planning catch-ups so that everyone can discuss the issues that arise and possible ways forward, such as the messages that you are giving students and parents, including what is realistic about what children can manage, and how parents can support that learning.
  - Discussing how to activate further support when it is needed – counselling, financial support, resource materials, IT help, leave, employment matters, requirements from the Ministry or other official agencies.
  - Building in times during the days, weeks, and months ahead to keep checking in on each other, creating support buddies or groups to debrief with like-minded people, for example, principals getting together over Zoom or another platform.