



# Respectful Relationships

## Pasifika people living our values

*This factsheet is part of a series of helpful information on how to maintain respectful relationships with people in your bubble, as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

The pandemic and being isolated to our household 'bubbles' has led to stress for many of us. This can put extra strain on our relationships at home. Lots of people may be experiencing "trouble in the bubble" at this time.

It is normal for people to be experiencing issues and frustrations in their relationship at this time. For Pasifika families and communities, one way to ensure we are maintaining respectful relationships in our bubbles is to remember our cultural values and put them into practice.

### Key Messages

- The **va** (relationships) between people is sacred for Pasifika
- When we apply our values to the way we act towards others, our relationships flourish
- When we hurt and disrespect people in our bubble, we harm the **va** in our bubble
- It is important to remember there are ways to repair the **va** and bring it back to a healthy state
- If relationships are unhealthy and/or abusive, we should reach out and seek support outside of our bubble.

### The Va

People need relationships to survive and thrive. Both research and experience have shown us that when we have supportive relationships in our lives, we are more likely to feel better and do better. As with all collective cultures, having good relationships is important for Pasifika people.

Traditionally, many Pasifika cultures believe that we are connected to everything around us. This is best explained using the concept of **va**.

Va refers to "the space between". When it comes to relationships between people, **the va** refers to the relational space that connects us.

The relational spaces between people within our family (or household bubble) are sacred. These sacred relationships exist between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, older and younger siblings, friends and extended family member. We need to look after and nurture these relationships.

The practice of **nurturing the va** is valued within traditional Pasifika cultures. How well we nurture this space or the **va** reflects on the overall wellbeing of our bubble.



## Nurturing the Va by living our Pasifika values

When we show our values in the way we talk, act and treat each other, we nurture the **va**. When we live by our values, we also feel better about ourselves and our wellbeing flourishes. When we are aggressive towards others, it goes against our cultural values. **#ViolenceIsNotOurCulture**.

Below are some common Pasifika cultural values and some helpful tips and examples on how to show your values.

Values	Bringing your values to life	Examples
<b>Family</b> 	<p>Think of ways you can make your family a priority.</p> <p>Be present and give your family your full attention when it is family time.</p> <p>If you're feeling frustrated or angry, don't take it out on other people in your bubble. <a href="#">Learn how to #CatchYourself before things get out of hand.</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up quality time with your family each day. Turn off your cell phones, iPads, laptops etc. and give your family your full attention.</li> <li>• If possible, talk to employers about how you will need to change your working-from-home schedule to care for your family.</li> <li>• Plan some fun family activities to do every night to bond e.g. board games, karaoke, zumba, cards.</li> </ul>
<b>Love</b> 	<p>Think about how your actions can show how much you care for others in your bubble.</p> <p>Think before you act and consider the feelings of other people in your bubble.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell your family you love them.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Check-in on the wellbeing of the people in your bubble.</a> Hug your children if they are feeling overwhelmed or sad.</li> <li>• Write a list of all the things you love about the different members of your bubble and share over dinner or put the note on your fridge for people to see.</li> <li>• Help around the house, without being asked.</li> <li>• Making a meal for your family.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b> 	<p>Remember that all people are of value and deserve to be treated this way.</p> <p>It's normal for people to have different opinions, and being respectful means being okay with this.</p> <p><a href="#">Learn how to talk and listen better in our tips on maintaining relationships</a></p>	<p>When others are talking, listen to understand. Let them finish talking without interrupting them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak to each other in a respectful way when you get into disagreements (don't raise your voice or use a sarcastic tone).</li> <li>• Respect each other's belongings and space. Ask before using other people's stuff or going into their room.</li> </ul>

## Service



In Pasifika cultures, service is valued and seen as a sign of respect and leadership.

Serving and helping others in your bubble helps the overall wellbeing of your bubble.

- For young people, helping parents out with chores and cooking is a great way to show service.
- You can show service by posting positive messages to your family and friends through social media.
- Helping others connect - teaching members of the family how to use technology such as facetime or zoom so that they can connect with other members of your family while in lockdown.

## Reciprocity



Sharing the responsibility for tasks can build teamwork in the bubble. Doing fun things that involve working together can be a great way to start.

Notice when kindness has been shown to you and try to pass this on

- Do things together such as cooking and baking, weeding the garden, folding and putting away the washing.
- Each day do one nice thing for another person in your bubble e.g. make breakfast, share TV or PlayStation, make someone's bed, give up the last cookie for your brother or sister.
- Take turns at doing chores around the house so that one person is not doing it all e.g. one person cooking and another washing the dishes.

## Spirituality



Connecting spiritually is good for your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your bubble.

Spirituality can look different for different people. What's important is that you do what feels right for you.

- Pray together.
- Meditate.
- Connect as a bubble by going for a walk locally and connecting with nature.
- Spend time with your bubble reading the bible. Bible stories also teach about the values of love, service, honour and respect.
- Tune in to digital platforms.
- Spend quality time alone with God.



## Put your values into action!

Plan how you can show your cultural values in your relationships with the people in your bubble. Fill in the **values statement** alone or do it together with your bubble. Put this up somewhere visible and review it to see how you are doing.

My Values	Actions I will take to show this value with people in my bubble	When will I do this?	Things that might stop me from doing this action. (Barriers)	How will I overcome barriers?
e.g. Family	Spend more fun time together	Games night - 10/04/2020	Distracted by other things	Set a time and stick to it! Reward ourselves for completing the games

## When the Va is harmed

We all experience stress and strain in our relationships. If we don't do anything to make it better, this can cause long term harm to our wellbeing and our relationships.

When we hurt and disrespect people in our bubble, we harm the **va** or the relationships in our bubble. This can lead to "trouble in the bubble".

It is normal to have disagreements. It is important to remember there are ways to repair the va and bring it back to a healthy state.

## What can I do?

Lots of people may be experiencing "trouble in the bubble" at this time.  
[So how do we stop things from getting out of hand?](#)



Sometimes we may not “catch ourselves” in time, and act in ways that upset or harm others in our bubble. If this happens, we need to repair our bubble back to a healthy state. Here are some tips:

- If you need to, apologise with sincerity. Say the words, “I’m sorry”.
- If you’ve made a mistake, admit to it and try and make things right
- Offer to do something that will make the other person/s in the relationship feel better
- Try to see the other person’s perspective, even if you don’t agree

## When the bubble bursts

Respect is at the centre of healthy relationships. When this is missing our relationships can become unhealthy and even abusive. If relationships are unhealthy and/or abusive, we should reach out and seek support outside of our bubble (see contact details below for free advice and support).

There is help available for those who are suffering from abuse of any kind. There is also help available for those who are hurting or abusing others. We don’t have to suffer in silence.

In healthy relationships, each person respects the other person. But sometimes our behaviour towards others in our bubble can be unhealthy, or even abusive. For some of us, it’s not easy to know what behaviours in a relationship are unhealthy. Check out below for some examples.



### Healthy

Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect. Healthy actions include:

- Feeling safe to share honest thoughts and feelings
- Valuing each other’s differences
- Trusting one another



### Unhealthy

Unhealthy relationships happen when respectful connections begin to fade. Actions can include:

- Not valuing the other person’s opinions and goals
- Not giving the other person space to do their own things
- Ignoring each other



### Abusive

In abusive relationships, there is no respect. Abusive actions can be emotional, physical, sexual, financial and spiritual. Abusive actions can include:

- Threatening words and actions
- Put-downs
- Violence including smacking, hitting, pushing and throwing things
- Forcing another person to do sexual acts

People on the receiving end of these behaviours can feel scared, alone, trapped, ashamed or whakamā, and feel they cannot tell others. It’s important to know that it is not your fault and that there is help available.



## More support



[auntydee.co.nz](http://auntydee.co.nz)



[mentalwealth.nz](http://mentalwealth.nz)



[atumai.nz](http://atumai.nz)



[leva.co.nz](http://leva.co.nz)

## If you need to talk to someone now

Help is available now, even during COVID-19 self-isolation and lockdown. Support is available for those feeling unsafe in their bubble and for those finding it difficult to manage their anger. Check out the information below.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call the Police on **111**, even if you're not sure.

### 1737

Free call or text **1737**. Kiwis feeling down can talk to a trained counsellor for free.

**1737**

### 0800 HeyBro

**(0800 439 276)** - Keeping Whānau Safe: We're here to support Men 24/7 to listen and to help. So give us a call next time you're on the edge!

### Women's Refuge

free call **0800 733 843** (0800 REFUGE) for 24-hour service advocacy and accommodation for women and their children experiencing family violence

### Youthline

Call **0800 376 633**, free text **234**, or email [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz)

### Elder Abuse Helpline

Call **0800 32 668 65** (0800 EA NOT OK). 24-hour service answered by registered nurses

### Tu Wahine Trust

Call **09 838 8700** for kaupapa Māori counselling, therapy and support for survivors of sexual harm (mahi tukino) and violence within whānau

### Covid-19

Find more information on the official government website [covid19.govt.nz/help-and-advice/for-everyone/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-prevention](https://www.covid19.govt.nz/help-and-advice/for-everyone/family-violence-and-sexual-violence-prevention)

Preventing violence by supporting families to have respectful relationships  
[www.atumai.nz](http://www.atumai.nz)

Equipping young people to look after their mental health.  
[www.mentalwealth.nz](http://www.mentalwealth.nz)

Growing the Pasifika mental health & addiction workforce  
[www.leva.co.nz/our-work/mental-health](http://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/mental-health)

Improving the quality of health services through cultural competency  
[www.leva.co.nz/training-education/engaging-pasifika](http://www.leva.co.nz/training-education/engaging-pasifika)

Enhancing mental health literacy in online gaming  
[www.manarestore.nz](http://www.manarestore.nz)

Igniting community collaboration for wellbeing solutions  
[www.leva.co.nz/our-work/gps-satellite-seminars](http://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/gps-satellite-seminars)

Supporting community-based suicide prevention for Pasifika families  
[www.leva.co.nz/our-work/suicide-prevention](http://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/suicide-prevention)

Equipping all New Zealanders with skills to prevent suicide  
[www.lifekeepers.nz](http://www.lifekeepers.nz)

Fostering te ao Māori approaches to suicide prevention training  
[www.lifekeepers.nz](http://www.lifekeepers.nz)

Championing equity for Pasifika people with disabilities  
[www.leva.co.nz/our-work/disability-support/faiva-ora-leadership](http://www.leva.co.nz/our-work/disability-support/faiva-ora-leadership)

Shaping resiliency in young people with e-mental health tools  
[www.auntydee.co.nz](http://www.auntydee.co.nz)

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#CatchYourself | Respect your bubble

Le Va

# *Faka'ita fai ki tahi*

Do not let anger rule  
your judgement



**#CatchYourself** | *Respect your bubble*