

LOVING YOURSELF STARTS FROM WITHIN YOU

WELCOME TO THE CLUB!

What we do

Balance Aotearoa is a lived experience-led organisation committed to transforming mental health and addiction systems through peer support, advocacy, and co-design. Rooted in the values of whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and equity, We champion community-led solutions that honour diverse voices and lived realities. Our mahi spans 11 peer support, Conversation Cafe's, peer support at Hope & co. advocacy, group support and facilitation and inclusive events - all designed to foster connection, reduce stigma, and uphold the mana of those navigating mental distress.

We believe in the power of storytelling, tactile design, and playful engagement to create spaces where people feel seen, heard, and valued. Whether through peer-led workshops, national submissions, or sensory-rich community events,

Balance Aotearoa continues to lead with heart, strategy, and lived wisdom.

October Highlights

October was filled with opportunities for kotahitanga - collaboration or collective action.

Across our communities, we gathered to honour stories of lived experience, to hold space for grief and hope, and to celebrate the strength that emerges when we walk alongside one another. From powerful moments of remembrance to playful, heart-led connection, October reminded us that healing is not a solo journey - it's something we do together, with open hearts and steady hands..

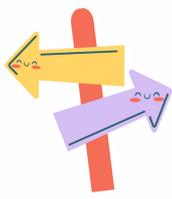
Our Balance and Hapori Kai Websites are up and running with loads of new information and sections to them.

Hope & Co. has a name and is running smoothly Wednesday - Sunday every week from 3pm-9pm



October

TRUST
* the *
PROCESS



Skill to work on this month



Each month, we'll spotlight a practical skill, tool, or technique to support emotional wellbeing, self-advocacy, and connection. These are small, doable practices you can explore at your own pace - whether you're building a personal toolkit, supporting others, or simply curious.

Feel free to jot the skill down in your journal or create your own log of self-help strategies. Over time, this collection can become a powerful resource - a reminder of what works for you, what grounds you, and what helps you navigate life's ups and downs.

Opposite Action

When your feelings say "hide," try doing the opposite. Sometimes our emotions tell us to do things that keep us stuck - like avoiding people, shutting down, or giving up. Opposite Action helps us gently challenge those urges and try something different

Why it helps:

Opposite Action gives us a way to shift stuck feelings by moving our bodies first.

When emotions like fear, anger, or shame tell us to shut down, hide, or lash out, this skill gently invites us to do the opposite. By choosing a different action - even a small one - we send a new message to our brain:

"I'm safe. I have choices. I can do this."

Over time, this rewires our emotional habits and builds confidence, courage, and flexibility.

HOW?

1

Notice the feeling.

"I feel scared." "I feel angry." "I feel ashamed."

2

Ask: Does this feeling fit the facts?

If not - or if acting on it won't help - try the opposite.

3

Do the opposite action.

If you want to hide → try reaching out.

If you want to yell → try a calm voice.

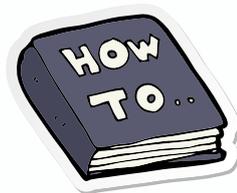
If you want to give up → take one small step.

4

Act as if.

Even if you don't feel like it, try it anyway.

Your body can lead your brain to a new feeling.



Kaimahi Highlight

Tilly

Tilly has been with Balance for 4 years, she began running the Art group and over time has taken on more diverse roles and tasks.

Tilly's Why: Because she really likes the people that we work with.

Tilly's favourite Colour - Autumnal Colours

Place - At the Beach

Tilly's go to coping skill is: Putting her face into a sink filled with ice cold water

Balance Groups

Balance Aotearoa offers a variety of Peer-led groups over the week in a range of places across the Whanganui area.

ALL of our groups are FREE and open to anyone!

Our groups are co-designed based of consumer feedback through feedback forms, kōrero and our monthly members hui's. Any and all feedback is both welcomed and actively encouraged. These groups are meant to benefit as many of our community as possible, so share the news around and give something new a try.

If you're feeling a bit anxious about turning up on your own, you are more than welcome to bring a support person, kaimahi, friend, whānau member along with you, or alternatively reach out to our peer team and ask for some peer support to come along.

We hope to see you around

Monday	9:30am - 11am	Hope & Co. Warm Cafe 63A Ridgway Street	Exploring Calm: A relaxed group where we explore different ways of finding calm. This can involve meditation, mindfulness, mindful movement, breath-work, herbal tea, and anything else that might help us experience calm in our lives and overcome the effects of stress and anxiety.
	1pm - 3pm	Hope & Co. Warm Cafe 63A Ridgway Street	Secret to mondays: Different topics are explored, including wellness plans, goal setting, confidence, empowerment and independence.
Tuesday	NO GROUPS		Closed
Wednesday	1-2:30pm	Whanganui Learning Centre - 232 Wicksteed St	Resiliency 101: An open course exploring our values, beliefs, goals, wellness tools, communication skills, resilience, self-confidence, relationships, and much more. New topics are covered each week.
Thursday	9:30am - 11:30am	Splash Centre	Splash Centre: Your chance to have a swim, gym, sauna, spa. An I.D card is necessary for free entry, contact Ana on 021 08443852.
	10am - 3pm	Level 2, 76 Guyton Street Whanganui Creative Space	Artistic Expression: Join our art tutor and our crafty, arty staff. Start something new, bring your own project, get artistic guidance, or simply make some artistic friends.
Friday	10am - 12pm	Salvation Army 4 Indus Street	The Posse - Addiction Support: A motivating and inspiring recovery group where we support each other in our recovery from addiction. This group is open to any addiction at any level. Held at The Salvation Army, 4 Indus Street.
	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Hope & Co. Warm Cafe 63A Ridgway Street	Sharing Circle: A relaxed group where we share what's on top for us in our mental health journey and life in general.

Group Content Month: November 2025

Exploring Calm

- 3/11 Mindfulness
- 10/11 EFT Tapping
- 17/11 Deep Meditation
- 24/11 Games

Secret to Mondays

- 3/11 Story Telling
- 10/11 Netflix Doco - On the Gut
- 17/11 How to write a C.V
- 24/11 Recognizing beliefs, healthy and unhealthy

Resilience 101

- 5/11 Developing Resilience through self-belief
- 12/11 Critical Thinking
- 19/11 Attachment Styles
- 26/11 Reflective Thinking

Artistic Expression

BYO project to work on or start something new.

Materials and ideas provided.

Thursday Social

Thursdays 5:30pm @ Hope & co.

- 6/11 Games Night
- 13/11 Bingo
- 20/11 Trivia Night
- 27/11 Movie Night

Addiction Recovery

10-12pm Fridays

- 7/11 Life after Addiction - Goals and Aspirations
- 14/11 Living Sober - Coping with ongoing challenges
- 21/11 Wellness Plans
- 28/11 Wellness Plans

Salvation Army - 4 Indus Street

Sharing Circle

Listen and share with peers

Fridays
1:30-2:30pm

Hope & Co. Warm Cafe
63A Ridgway Street

Other

Splash Group - Thursday mornings, you need your Balance ID to get in 9:30-1130am

Conversation Cafe - Tuesday 25th November @10am & 5:30pm

Members Hui
Tuesday 4/11/25 @ 11am

Date's to remember

Important things coming up in November

Saturday 1st November - Whanau Ora Day @
Springvale Stadium

Tuesday 4th November - Members Feedback
Kōrero @ Hope & Co.

Wednesday - Sunday
EVERY WEEK - Hope & Co. Open 3-9pm

Wednesday - Sunday
EVERY WEEK - Hapori Kai 3-5pm

Tuesday 25th November - Conversation Cafe
Hope & Co. 63A Ridgway Street
10-12pm & 5:30-7:30pm

Have anything coming up in a specific month that you would like added to this section of the newsletter?

Get in touch to have it added.



Group of the month

SECRET TO MONDAYS

When: Monday Afternoons 1-3pm

Where: Hope & Co.
63A Ridgway Street

Secret to Mondays is more than a group - it's a weekly reset, a place to reconnect with your goals, your strengths, and your sense of self. Each session offers a guided journey through topics like wellness planning, confidence building, goal setting, and reclaiming independence. But it's not just about ticking boxes - it's about discovering what really matters to you, and finding practical, empowering ways to move toward it.

Participants are invited to reflect, share, and take action in ways that feel safe and achievable. Whether it's mapping out a wellness plan, practicing assertiveness, or exploring what independence looks like in daily life, the group creates space for both dreaming and doing.

🕒 What makes it special:

- Gentle structure with room for choice and creativity
- Strengths-based kōrero that honours lived experience
- Activities that build real-world skills and emotional insight
- A warm, validating vibe that says: You've got this.

Secret to Mondays helps people start the week with intention - not pressure. It's a space where confidence grows quietly, and where every small step is celebrated

Want to start your week with purpose?

Come along to Secret to Mondays – a space for dreaming, planning, and growing your power.



★ How To "Sit With" Uncomfortable Emotions ♡

SelfLoveRainbow

Let emotions exist without judgment

Allow yourself to cry

Learn how to identify what you are feeling

Validate what you are feeling and why you feel it

Feel whatever you feel without labeling it as bad

Stay present & mindful

Use coping skills that focus on processing instead of ignoring

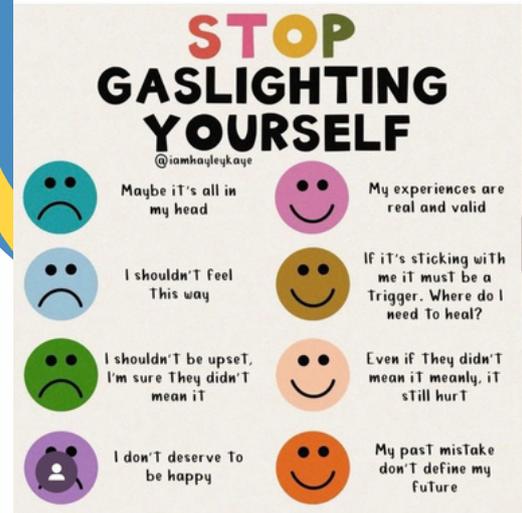
Know that your feelings won't last forever



You said | We did

Your voices shape everything we do.

Every kōrero, suggestion, and piece of feedback helps us grow stronger as a community. In this new section, we're sharing how your insights have guided real changes - from group topics and space setups to signage, support systems, and beyond.



You said: You wanted the Thursday group to stay, with a reliable rotation of activities and facilitator.

We did: Heard your kōrero, put in place that the Thursday evening group is here to stay and found new ways to communicate the plans with members.

You said: You'd like more consistent, reliable communication and feedback on your feedback.

We did: We've got this new section to feedback monthly, have re-formatted the feedback forms and have new agendas, minutes and action points for the members hui's. Don't forget to come along to have your voice heard!

Contact

Want to get in touch?

Email: info@balance.org.nz

Phone: 06 345 44 88

Free Phone: 0800 10 25 55

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

<https://www.balance.org.nz/>

