

Take Notice / Me Aro Tonu

Taking notice involves paying attention to the present moment, to thoughts and feelings and to the world around us. The activities listed below will help students to be more present, taking notice of things that perhaps they normally wouldn't.

Get crafty with our colouring competition:

We know connecting with nature can uplift our wairua/spirit and promote wellbeing, so our Mental Health Awareness Week colouring competition encourages all kids to get outdoors to connect with the joy and wonder of being in nature!

This activity will help students get out into nature, explain how they connect with it, describe what they see, smell, touch and hear, and be creative as they do it.

The three lucky winners from three age groups (ages 4–6, 7–9 and 10–12) will win a \$100 Prezzy card. Head to our [website](#) to read the competition details.

Explore your local environment:

Connecting your students with their [local environment](#) may be as simple as exploring, listening and looking for flora and fauna outside the classroom or around the school. You might want students to simply Take Notice of the sounds of birds or discover as many insects as they can.

Activity:

Ask your students to do one of the following, individually or in small groups:

1. Name the things they noticed (e.g. manu/birds, clouds or insects)
2. Write or draw the things they noticed
3. Count the different types of species they notice (e.g. how many tui or sparrows?)
4. Choose one to write further about. What did it look like, where did it grow, what sound did it make and how did it make you feel?
5. Older students could research further and find out if there are Māori myths, legends or local stories of significance to a particular species that they noticed.

Mindfulness:

Mindfulness is the practice of giving our full attention to what is immediately occurring, physically and mentally, within and around us. It is a powerful part of Take Notice, one of the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#). For information about mindfulness for children, [watch](#) or [read](#) the links.

Activity:

Mindfulness is used in meditation, and guided meditation can easily be incorporated into a classroom. For [young children](#), a meditation activity might be as simple as lying down with a small soft toy on their puku/stomach and asking them to Take Notice of the toy rising and falling as they breathe.

Here are some guided meditations specifically for young people in classrooms, where nature is incorporated:

- [Guided meditation with nature sounds](#)
- [Take Notice mindfulness](#)
- [Whakapapa/genealogy mindfulness.](#)

Mindfulness and using our senses:

This activity helps tamariki discover and focus on senses they rarely use so they can find new ways to be present and enjoy the moment.

Activity 1:

Ask students to tune in to each sense they have – smell, taste, sight, sound and touch. You could ask them to hone in on one sense a day or work through a guided meditation about using the senses. Here is a [script](#) to guide your students through a mindfulness exercise using all five senses.

Activity 2:

For younger taihoi/children, having physical objects to touch, taste, see, hear and smell is a great way to start. Items could be brought into the classroom or the class could go into nature to Take Notice of their senses. Ask students to focus on one sense at a time.

Examples of senses activities you can run in class:

- Smell: Pine needles, grass or cotton wool with lavender.
- Touch: Pinecones, sand, moss, stones, drift wood, wind on the skin or warmth of the sun.
- Taste: Orange, apple or taro.
- [Sight](#): Colours in the trees, foliage, clouds, flowers or clouds.
- [Sound](#): Birds, wind in the trees, the flow of water or insects.

Outdoor activities:

Allowing students to slow down and Take Notice of their current surroundings can often create a sense of calm within them.

Encourage students to take time out of the school day to:

- Lie on the grass and watch the clouds go by – what shapes do the clouds make?
- Jump in puddles or notice the reflections of the environment in the water.
- Hug and climb trees.
- Feel the wind through their hair or feel the warmth of the sun on their back.

