

Mental Health  
Awareness Week  
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## Pūru kororā pōuri | Blue little penguin

Wilson, Norah. (2019). Blue Goat Books.



This is a story about friendship and feelings. It features two New Zealand native birds as best friends: Blue is a Little Blue Penguin and Ruru a Morepork.

The story is sweet and humorous. We would all like to think we have at least one friend like Blue's friend Ruru. The friend who sticks with you through the hard times, and you are both content in each other's company. They just get you.

Blue is having a difficult time and Ruru assures him that his feelings are normal and offers him support in his own unique way.

Author Norah Wilson is a mum, teacher and budding self-published author and illustrator. Introducing herself on her Facebook page, she says "Feelings are important and I want kids feeling them and talking about them." I think the book accomplishes this, as the characters' actions show kids that strong feelings are OK and with support you can find a way to manage them. Her super cute illustrations also enhance the story's message.

For a short and simple book, it quickly gets across its affirming message – that it is important to look out for each other. The first sentence jumps right in with "Hi. How are you?" Ruru takes time to listen and treats Blue like he normally would, involving him in activities and checking in regularly.

My 10-year-old son thought it was more suited to a younger age group, and could see merit in little kids learning that it is important to be a good friend and help others.

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I feel this simple book provides a powerful message that could be incorporated into class units looking at ways to be a good friend, i.e. what is helpful and what is not, such as not interrupting. It has also been translated into te reo Māori by Maimoa NZ. I can definitely see this title in most NZ primary and public libraries.

**Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Management Specialist, MHF**



The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews as part of the Good Reads feature for Mental Health Awareness Week. To view more go to <https://mhaw.nz/>

