

## **WAYS A PARISH CAN BE A PLACE OF SUPPORT FOR THOSE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND THEIR WHANAU**

1. Find people who have personal experience of mental health challenges in your parish and ask them what they would like to see. Listening to the people in your parish is very important, each parish may have very different needs so your response needs to be specific.
2. Learn about all the local services in your area, not just ones such as Catholic Social Services. The more services you know about the more you can do to point people in the right direction when they are struggling.
3. One of the highest suicide rates is among men 85+ who lose a wife or long-term partner. Ask yourselves what are we doing to support this group? Sometimes men of this age may not come to a bereavement group but they may come to things such as a working bee.
4. Ask yourself what you can do for the families of people with mental health challenges. Often there is quite a bit of support for the person who is struggling, but there is not so much support for the families who are also struggling.

Ideas supplied by Michael Hempseed, the director of Frontiers of Hope can provide training in how to support people who are struggling, [info@foh.co.nz](mailto:info@foh.co.nz)