

Whanaungatanga

Lyana Ross, Whitireia Polytechnic, Aotearoa New Zealand

Today I sit here on the Kapiti Coast, 60 kilometres north of Wellington, in Aotearoa New Zealand. I'm in my lounge, surrounded by my study materials, listening to a presentation via Zoom, eight weeks after our initial Covid-19 lockdown began and I think of what this time has meant to me and my peers.

#Whānau Humble

We entered this lockdown¹ with resounding anxiety and worry. Covid-19 was taking over our world, killing thousands of people, predominantly the elderly. We tried hard not to think about the possibility of it taking our whānau and we felt pride in our nation for implementing hard and fast, even extreme measures, to protect its citizens. We brought our people home and we “stayed home and saved lives”.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety

Our study continued online. It was as new for our tutors as it was for the students; new methods of delivery and new ways of learning. No library, no face-to-face classes, and for some, no access to internet or computers. The struggle was real, it was not racist, or ageist, it hit us randomly, stealing motivation, crushing hope and threatening our future prospects. It brought tears, frustration and a sense of hopelessness.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance

During the lockdown we lost whānau. We lost a precious father and a beloved baby. We could not gather together to wrap our loved ones in a communal cloak of protection, we could not farewell our

departed in the ways our souls cried out for. We grieved and we broke.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance Unconditional

The pressures of our studies grew, assignments became due. Members of our class laid down their books and postponed their dreams. Tutors rallied around trying to meet our needs in this constantly changing environment, due dates were extended, oral assessments became reality. Our class presence online began to change—more faces appeared on our Zoom sessions, more questions on our forums, more engagement on our posts.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance Unconditional New Gradual

Things slowly started to make sense and our assignments gradually reached completion. Resources were shared, links posted and peer review began. The class led initiatives, discussions and debates. Collectively we pushed through and pushed back against the stifling effects of covid-19; finally, we sank into that feeling of relief and release as we began to submit assignments.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance Unconditional New Gradual Accountable

That anxious wait to receive our first results, still knee deep in our next assignment, seemed to take forever. It was a time to take stock. Are we all here? How can we help? Those who had moved ahead left a trail of references, links, drafts and

AOTEAROA
NEW ZEALAND SOCIAL
WORK 32(2), 73–74.

CORRESPONDENCE TO:
Lyana Ross
LyanaRoss@orcon.net.nz

ideas for the others to follow, hoping that by the time we can return to class we will all be in the same place again.

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance Unconditional New Gradual Accountable Tautoko Ally

The weather has been amazing; the skies have been blue and the air so crisp and clean. Our environment, wildlife and oceans are healing. People are walking, families are bonding, and children are laughing. Connections are happening in our classes, bonds are tightening, and growth is upon us.

WHANAUNGATANGA

#Whānau Humble Anxiety Need Assistance Unconditional New Gradual Accountable Tautoko Ally Nurture Growth Aroha

Note

- i In March 2020 the New Zealand Government announced four levels of alert for the Covid-19 pandemic. These levels specified the actions required and Level 4 was the highest. <https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19/restrictions/alert-system-overview/>