



# Supporting a Child with Cancer

This presentation offers insights into supporting children diagnosed with cancer in New Zealand, focusing on emotional, practical, and cultural aspects for families and caregivers navigating this journey.

**PRESENTED BY THE SILENT HUM PROJECT**



# Understanding Childhood Cancer in NZ

Common types, prevalence, and local statistics

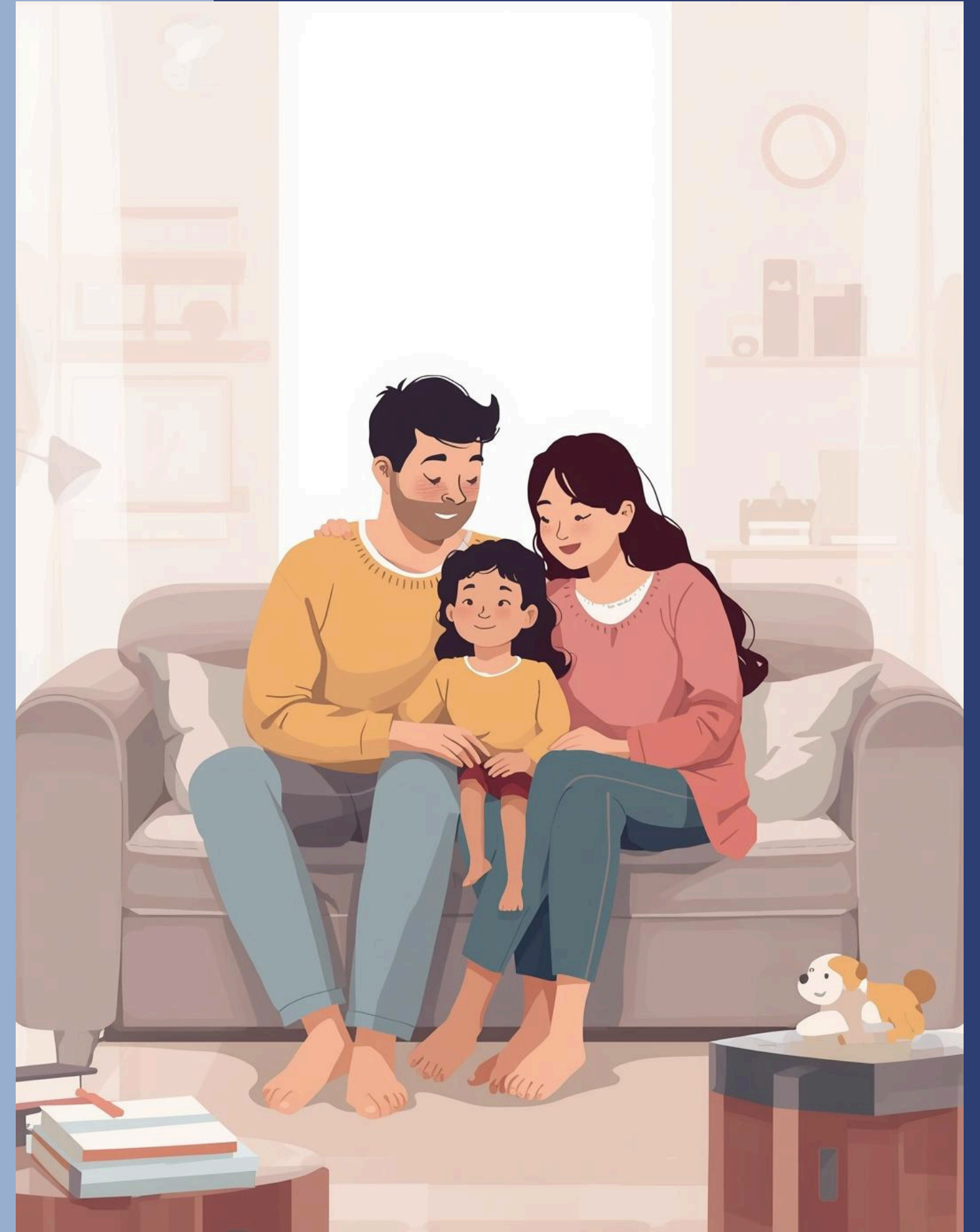
- **Leukemia:** The most prevalent childhood cancer in NZ.
- **Brain Tumors:** Second most common, affecting various age groups.
- **Lymphoma:** Includes Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's types.
- **Statistics:** Over 200 children diagnosed annually in NZ.
- **Survival Rates:** Increasing due to advancements in treatment.
- **Impact:** Long-term health effects on children and families.



Emotional challenges

"It's okay to  
feel scared.  
We just take it  
one day at a  
time."

– NZ FAMILY







The New Zealand healthcare system provides a structured pathway for children diagnosed with cancer.

- **Diagnosis:** Initial symptoms lead to consultations with general practitioners who refer patients to pediatric specialists.
- **Treatment Pathway:** Encompasses chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery, tailored to each child's specific needs.
- **Key Treatment Centers:** Major hospitals like Starship Children's Hospital and Wellington Regional Hospital provide specialized care.
- **Multidisciplinary Teams:** Involves oncologists, nurses, social workers, and psychologists to support holistic care.
- **Support Services:** Counseling, financial assistance, and community support are crucial for families navigating treatment.

Families are encouraged to actively engage with these services to ensure comprehensive support throughout the treatment journey.



# Effective Communication Strategies for Support

## AGE-APPROPRIATE ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging open dialogue

## SENSITIVE FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

Discussing difficult topics

## TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

Resources for families







Schools play a vital role in supporting children diagnosed with cancer.

- **Academic Continuity:** Provide flexible learning options to accommodate treatment schedules.
- **Emotional Support:** Create a safe space for students to express their feelings and fears.
- **Inclusivity:** Implement programs to foster kindness and understanding among classmates.
- **Teacher Training:** Equip educators with the tools to support students emotionally and academically.
- **Collaboration:** Work closely with healthcare professionals to ensure a holistic approach to the child's well-being.

By fostering a supportive environment, schools can greatly enhance the educational and social experiences of children facing cancer.

# Cultural Considerations in New Zealand: Māori and Pasifika Perspectives

## UNDERSTANDING MĀORI PERSPECTIVES

Māori culture deeply values **whānau**, or family, as a support system during illness. Concepts like **tikanga** emphasize respect, connection, and holistic care. This cultural framework encourages a communal approach to health, where families work together to navigate challenges, ensuring emotional and practical support for both the child and caregivers.

## EMBRACING PASIFIKA PERSPECTIVES

The Pasifika community prioritizes **collective support** and family involvement in caregiving. Understanding cultural beliefs around health and illness is crucial. Strong ties to family and community foster resilience, allowing children to face their diagnosis with the backing of their loved ones, while promoting a sense of belonging and cultural identity.

# Essential Resources and Organizations in NZ

## **CHILD CANCER FOUNDATION**

The **Child Cancer Foundation** provides vital support to children diagnosed with cancer and their families, offering practical resources, counseling, and financial assistance. They aim to enhance the quality of life for affected families through holistic support and community engagement.

## **LEUKAEMIA & BLOOD CANCER NZ**

**Leukaemia & Blood Cancer NZ** specializes in providing information and assistance to individuals affected by blood cancers. They focus on patient support, education, and awareness, helping families navigate their treatment journey and connect with others facing similar challenges.

## **KIDSCAN**

**KidsCan** is dedicated to supporting children living in hardship, including those affected by cancer. They provide essential resources such as food, clothing, and health services to ensure these children have access to the support they need to thrive in school and life.



# Self-Care for Caregivers: Vital Strategies

## RECOGNIZING STRESS

Caregivers often experience **significant stress** while supporting children with cancer. Recognizing the signs of stress, such as fatigue, irritability, and emotional overwhelm, is crucial. Acknowledging these feelings is the first step towards seeking help and implementing self-care strategies, ensuring both the caregiver's and child's well-being.

## SEEKING SUPPORT

It is essential for caregivers to connect with others for support. Engaging with peer support groups, counseling services, or trusted friends can provide critical emotional relief. Sharing experiences and coping strategies helps reduce feelings of isolation, empowering caregivers to sustain their health while providing care for their loved ones.

# Learning from Families' Experiences

Real-life stories of support and resilience in New Zealand

This section highlights the diverse challenges faced by families navigating childhood cancer. Through selected anonymized stories, we explore the **strength and resilience** demonstrated by these families and the various supports that have made a difference in their journeys.





# Support with Compassion and Knowledge

## CONTACT INFORMATION

021-809-322

## WEBSITE

[www.silenthum.org.nz](http://www.silenthum.org.nz)

## EMAIL ADDRESS

[contact@silenthum.org.nz](mailto:contact@silenthum.org.nz)



