

# Read the room

Take the pulse of the room. Act when it feels “off”, using your experience to make changes before they turn into problems.

- Begin by building rapid rapport and connection.
- Connect with ākongā using verbal and non-verbal techniques.
- Pay attention to your own emotional responses.
- At the early stages of distress, you may be able to distract or redirect ākongā. Note that distraction and redirection do not address underlying issues. This means they may be ineffective in the long term.
- Be aware that as challenging situations escalate and emotions heighten, calm logical processing ability is very diminished. It is unlikely that ākongā will be able to think or hear much, so keep messages simple and consistent.

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