

Bearhugs for Hawkes Bay



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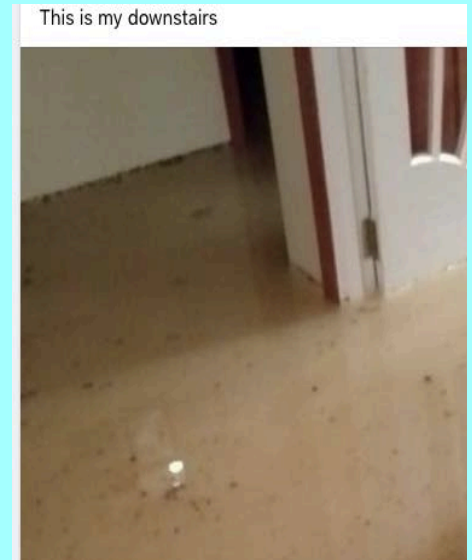
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Kia ora, my name is Bear. I live in Canterbury with two humans and my best friend Alligator. We share a toybox with an interesting collection of toys and bears left behind when the small humans grew up and moved away.



One day, I was checking my Facebook page when my friend Karen posted a picture of her flooded house.



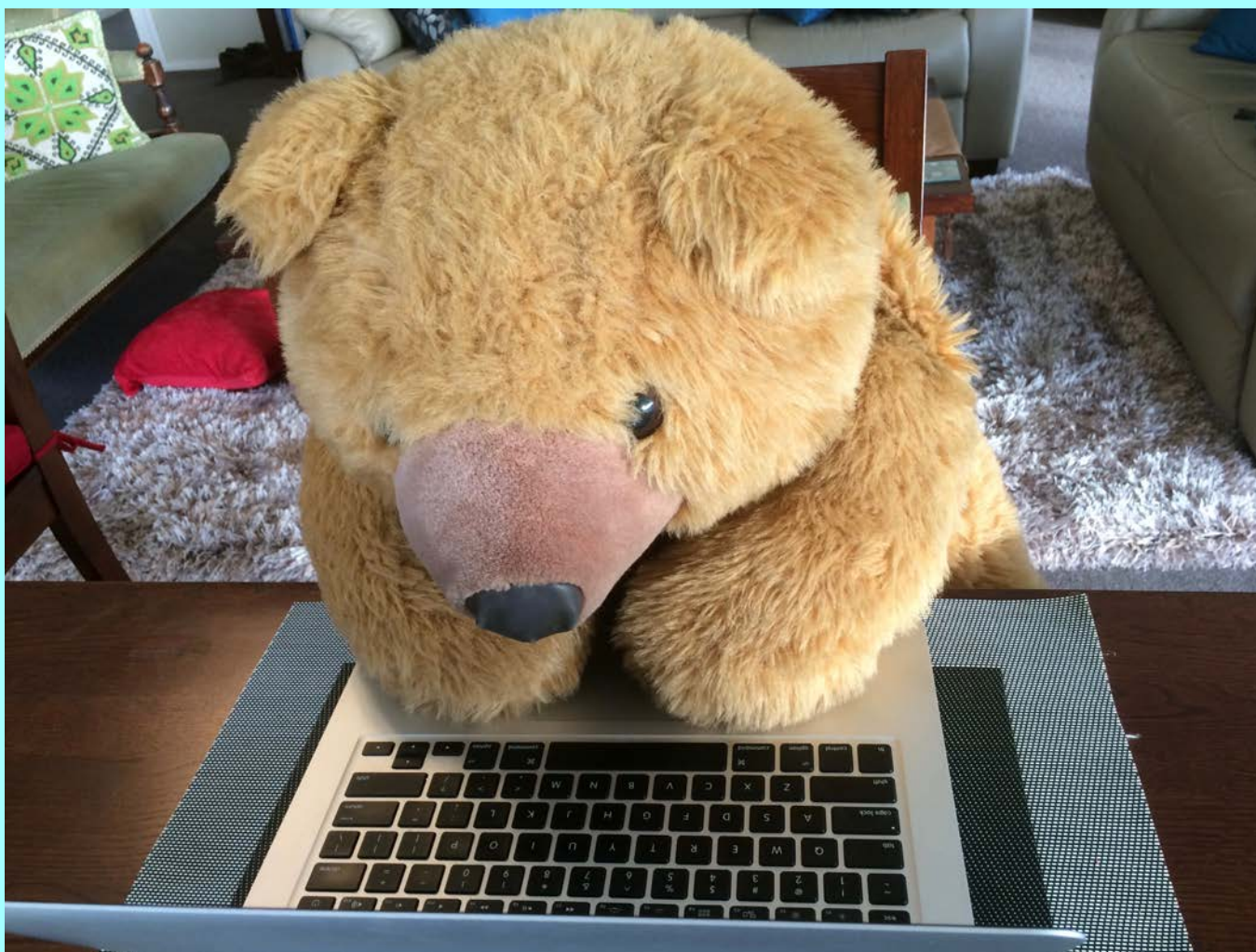


I called the toys together and said, “We need to do something.”

“Yes,” said Alligator. “Do you remember how we helped all the children in New Zealand when they had to keep going into Covid lockdowns?”

“And we know a little bit about how the children in Hawkes Bay feel because we had the earthquakes in Canterbury, and then fires and floods,” I added. “In the 2021 floods, we ended up being trapped and not able to go anywhere and the little bears were very frightened.”





“We could write another book,” suggested Alligator.

And with that all the toys started suggesting ideas and talking over each other until I said, "Slow down and think. What did children like best in our lockdown stories?"



“When you got stuck inside the letterbox,” laughed Jingle Bear.



“And when you played hide and seek, but you thought no-one could see you!”

“When you watered the weeds and dug up the roses!”

“And fell off the trampoline!”



“What about when you tried to teach Alligator about farming!” laughed Father Bear.



And with that, the toys fell about laughing.

“Be serious,” I said.

“What were some of the messages in the book to help children cope when they felt sad or frightened?”



“Find someone you trust to talk to about your feelings. And remember everyone feels differently, so just be patient,” said Alligator.



“Be kind to others and cheer them up if they feel sad,” said Nicholas Bear.



“Share what you have with others in need.”



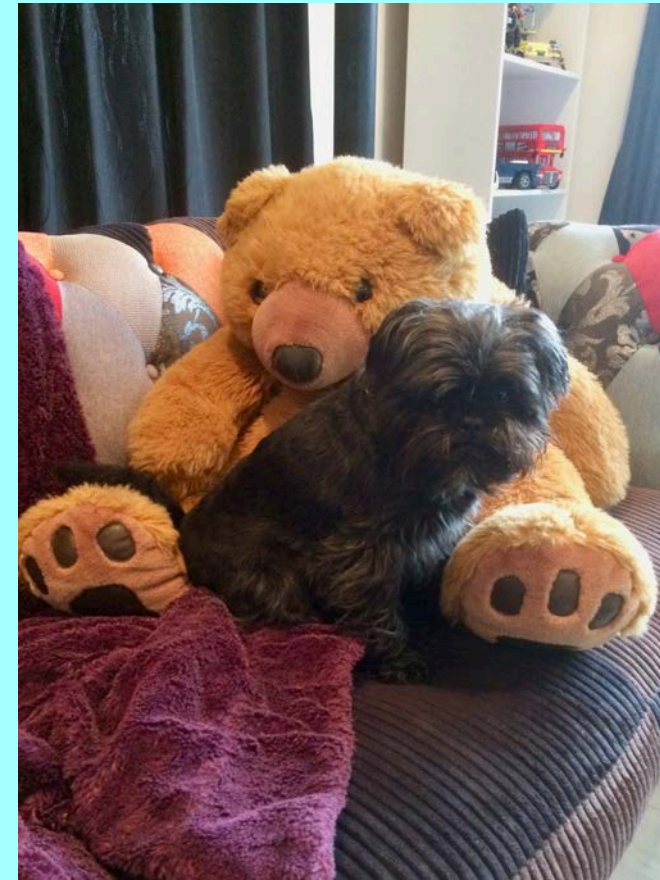
“Helping others makes you feel better, too,” added Papa Bear.



“Check on your neighbours and friends to see if they need any help.”

“And what are some ways you can make yourself feel better when you start to feel sad or worried or stressed again?” I asked.

“You can find a quiet space to chill out,” suggested Bill Bear. “Or hug your pets,” said Baby Bear.



“Or spend time with your friends and family,” suggested Sailor Bear.





“Or go outside and look for a little treasure in every day,” suggested Berry.

“I also like to get some exercise when I start to think worrying thoughts again,” she added.



“And when you feel that you have lost everything or that things couldn’t get worse, try to find some positives.”

“And make plans for a time when things will start to get better. What would you like the future to be like? What can help you get there?”

“The strongest people are not those who have never had difficulties but those who learn to pick themselves up after each setback”





“And you’ll always feel better when you have a bear to hug,” laughed Mama Bear.





Kia ora koutou tamariki

We know this is a difficult time. Floods are wet and messy and smelly. It takes a long time to clean up and you might have lost very precious things. Try to be brave. There are many bears and humans caring about you all around the country.

Kia kaha, kia maia, kia manawanui!

Love and hugs,

From Bear, Panda, Baby Bear, Koala, Mama Bear, Sailor Bear, Berry, Jingle Bear, Pooh Bear, Teddy, Papa Bear and all the bears everywhere (and don't forget Alligator).