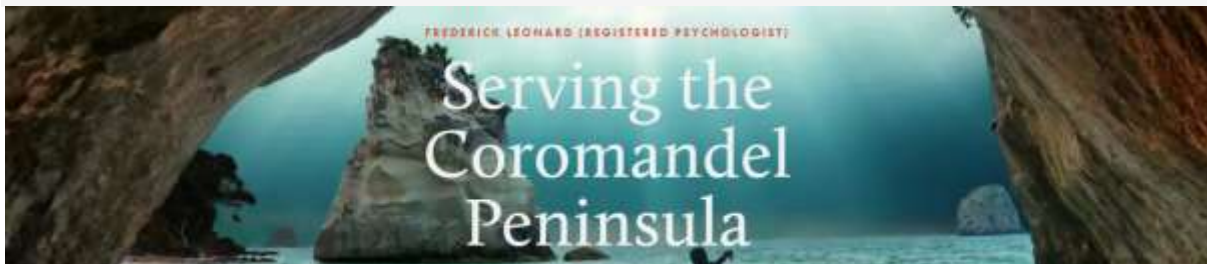


WHITIANGA PSYCHOLOGY



Mood Issues

Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is the distress that occurs to children (or even adults) when they anticipate separating from home or from parents or any person they've become severely attached to. Children with separation anxiety issues may cling to their loved ones, refusing to go to school or to bed, be reluctant to attend school trips or sleep over at friends.

When separation is forced (such a need to attend school), children may become withdrawn, sad, or have difficulty concentrating on school work and social play. Family members often become frustrated because the child believes that something devastating might happen to loved ones, or the loved one might not come back again.

Selective Mutism

At school, children who present as reluctant speakers appear to present with a severe freeze/retreat stress response as soon as they are approached by unfamiliar peers, teachers or other people at school. This response indicates that the person's brain is permanently flooded with Cortisol - "stress hormone". The result is that the person is caught up in psychological state of panic and stress, and never released from it so that he/she can return to 'normal' like others do after a traumatic incident. The child may consequently be living in a biological state of survival. It may feel something like this: *The child feels that the whole world is intensely watching him/her- it is like being under a hot spotlight, always. The child may feel intensely nervous and scared, never having a break from it. These feelings are especially elevated when he/she meets new people (guests in the classroom for example), or when any new expectations are placed on him/her at school.*

School Refusal

School refusal refers to severe emotional distress when the young person needs to attend school, resulting in significant truancy from school. Children who refuse school usually do not participate in the same antisocial behaviours that are associated with truancy, such as lying, swearing, stealing and/or destruction of property.