

***Drowning
Prevention
Auckland***

education • research • advocacy



Tuia ki Tawhiti 2024

Risky River Behaviours – how bad is it and what can we do?

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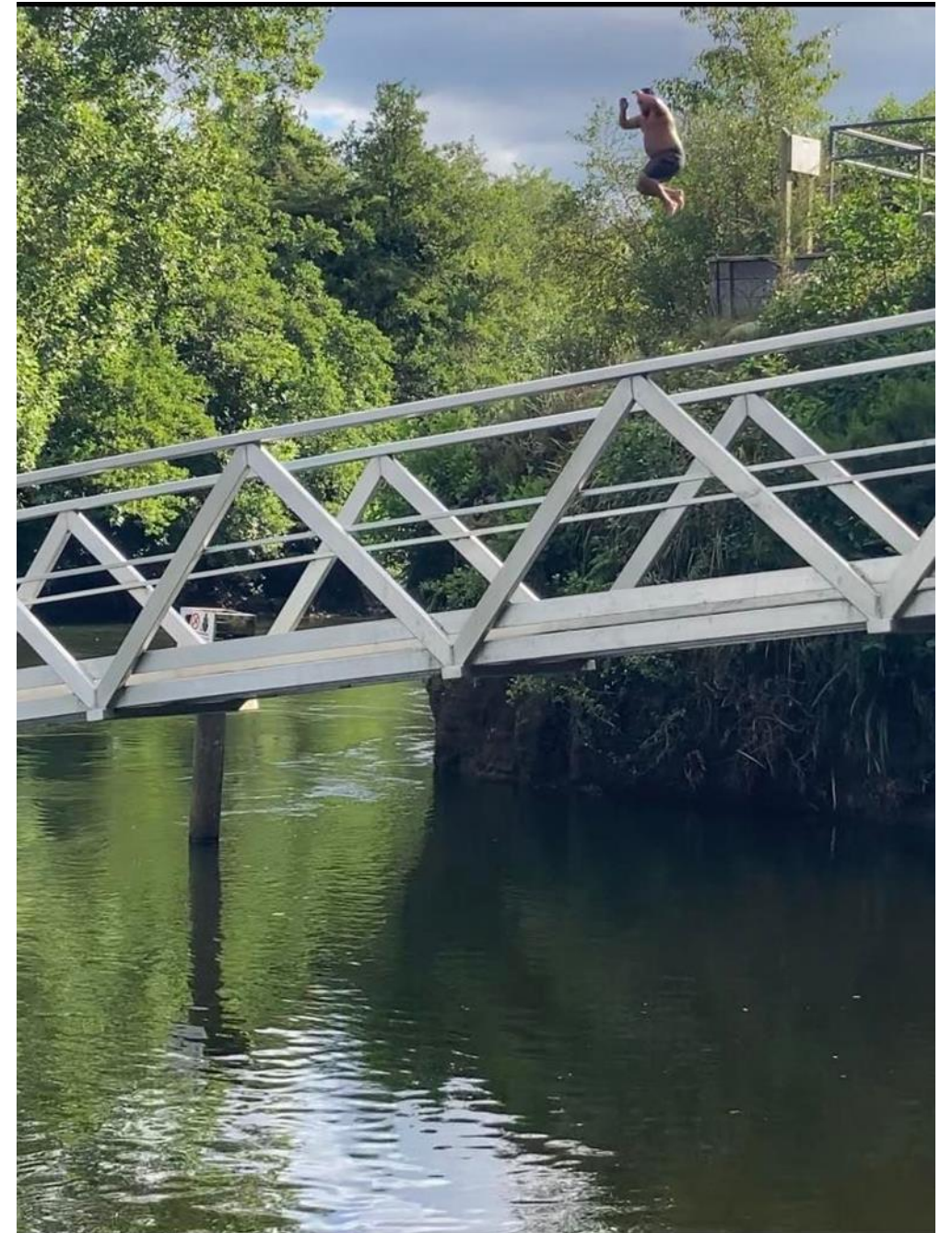
25% of young
New Zealanders
think that rivers are not
dangerous.



Observation Research

Goal – what aquatic activity is really happening on the awa?

- How much?
- Who?
- What activity?
- Where?



Observation Study Results

- 52% of all river visitors were in water

At-risk behaviours

- 51% jumping in from the edge
- 36% jumping in from height over 2m
- 10% river drifting without buoyancy
- 48% wearing inappropriate swim attire



Observation Study Results

“Father encouraging kids, who clearly cannot swim, to jump in the water when he is the entire jetty's length away from them.”

“Another incident was that a boy that 'didn't know how to swim' wanted to jump off with everyone else”

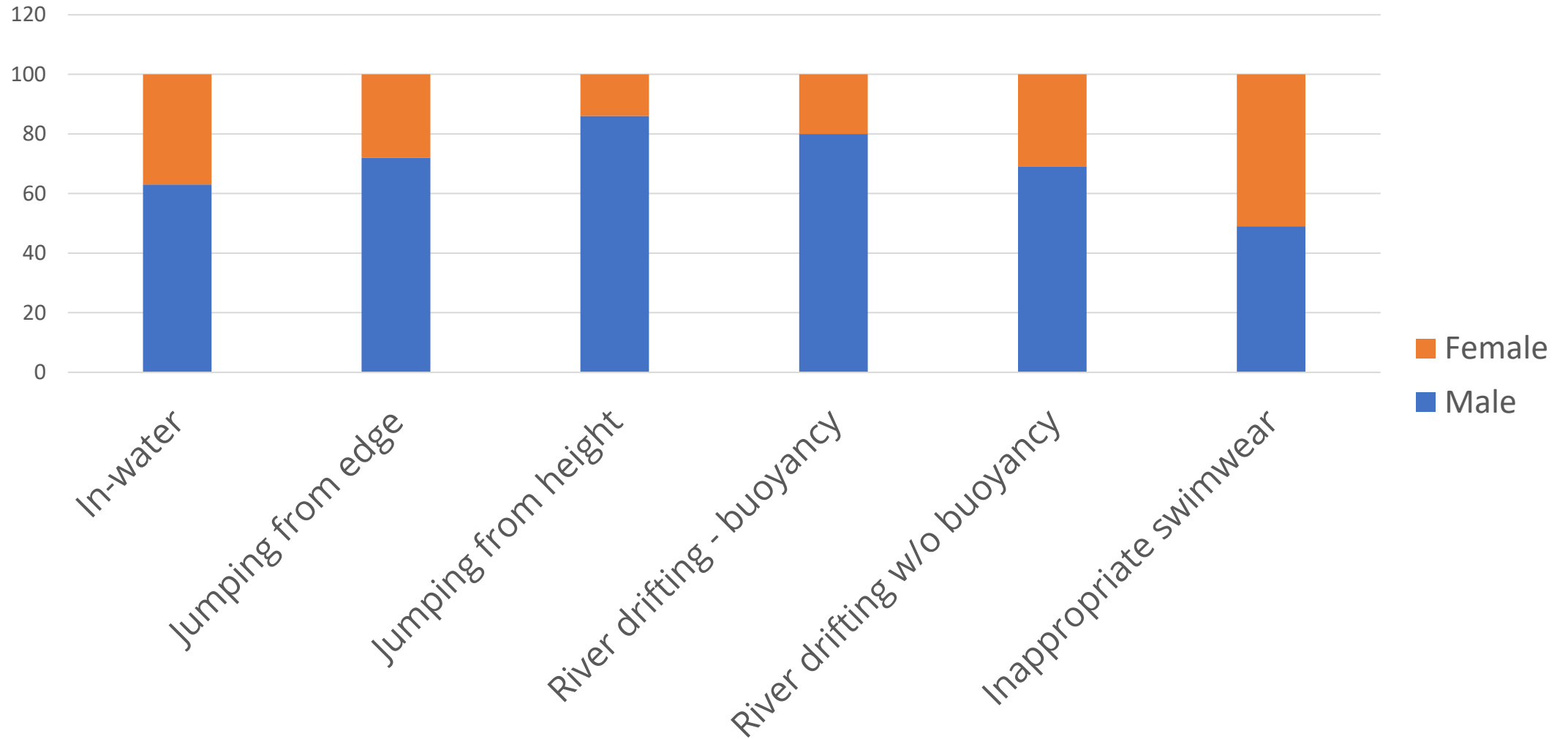
“Toddler, fully clothed swimming in the shallows with fully clothed mother.”

“Two river users drifting down river without buoyancy. Drifted past the site and continued down river”

“Kids being unsupervised trying to jump off bridge into water, and cannot see what's below”

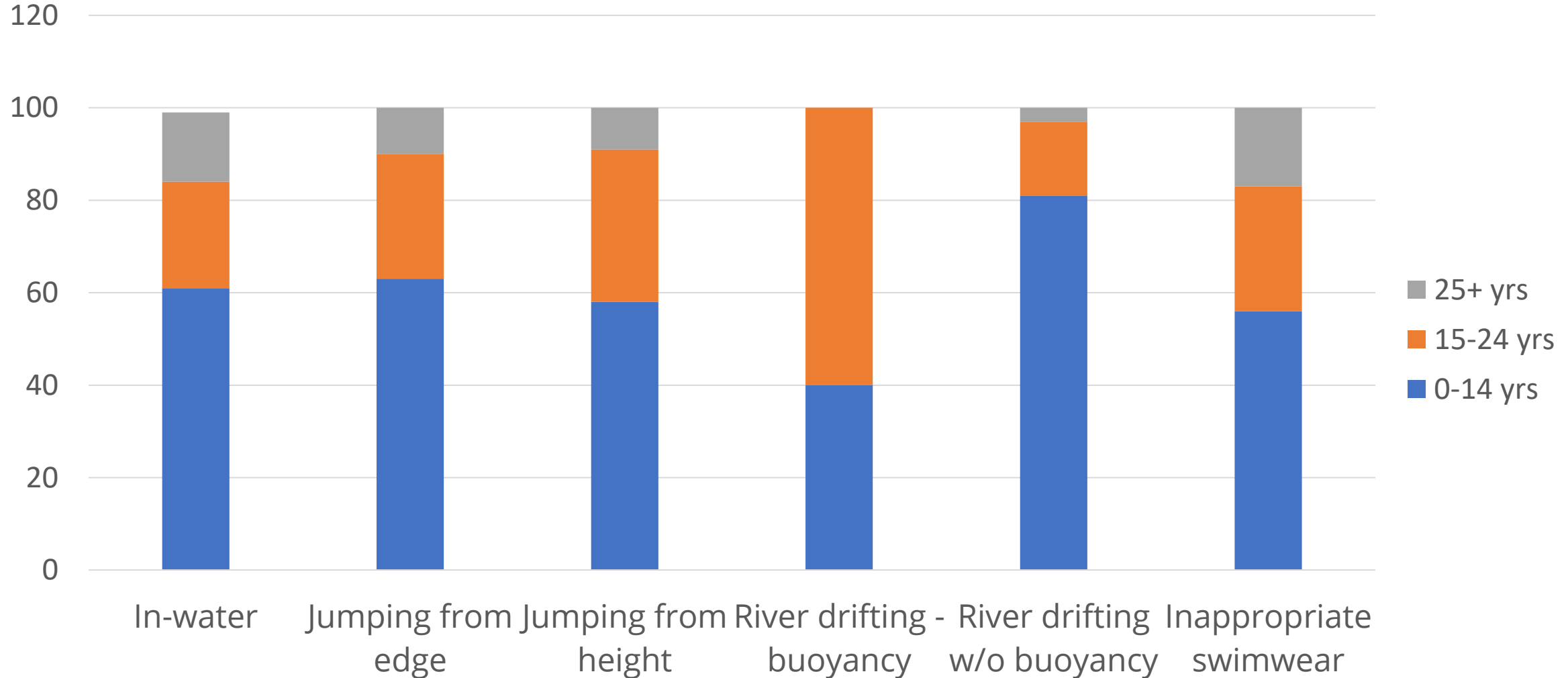
Observation Study Results - Gender

Percentage of Risky Behaviours by Gender



Observation Study Results - Age

Percentage of Risky Behaviours by Age



Interview Research

Goal - to determine knowledge, attitudes, perceived competence and risk **of those undertaking at-risk behaviours**

Interview Results – Perceived water competence

Swimming

- 78% good/very good form
- 54% more than 100 m in 5-mins

Floating

- 85% good/very good form
- 92% stationary float > 5 mins

Interview Results - Attitudes

My swimming competence

- keep me safe – 91%
- not wear lifejacket – 82%
- rescue others – 74%
- others at greater risk – 68%
- don't feel any risk – 63%

Interview Results - Comments

“Nah we don’t check the bottom before we jump, we know there’s rocks there so we don’t jump when it’s low but when it’s high it’s alguds”

“I’ve found knives, signs, sticks, all sorts when jumping into the river before”

“Yeah there was 20 of us trying to save this “larger guy” who was Fijian, they just didn’t know how strong the currents where and he got pulled out, nothing could be done”

“Yeah I don’t wanna be empaled miss” (so, didn’t jump from the tree).

“They say the waters always dangerous when it’s low and when it’s high, why shouldn’t we be swimming”

What do we need to do?

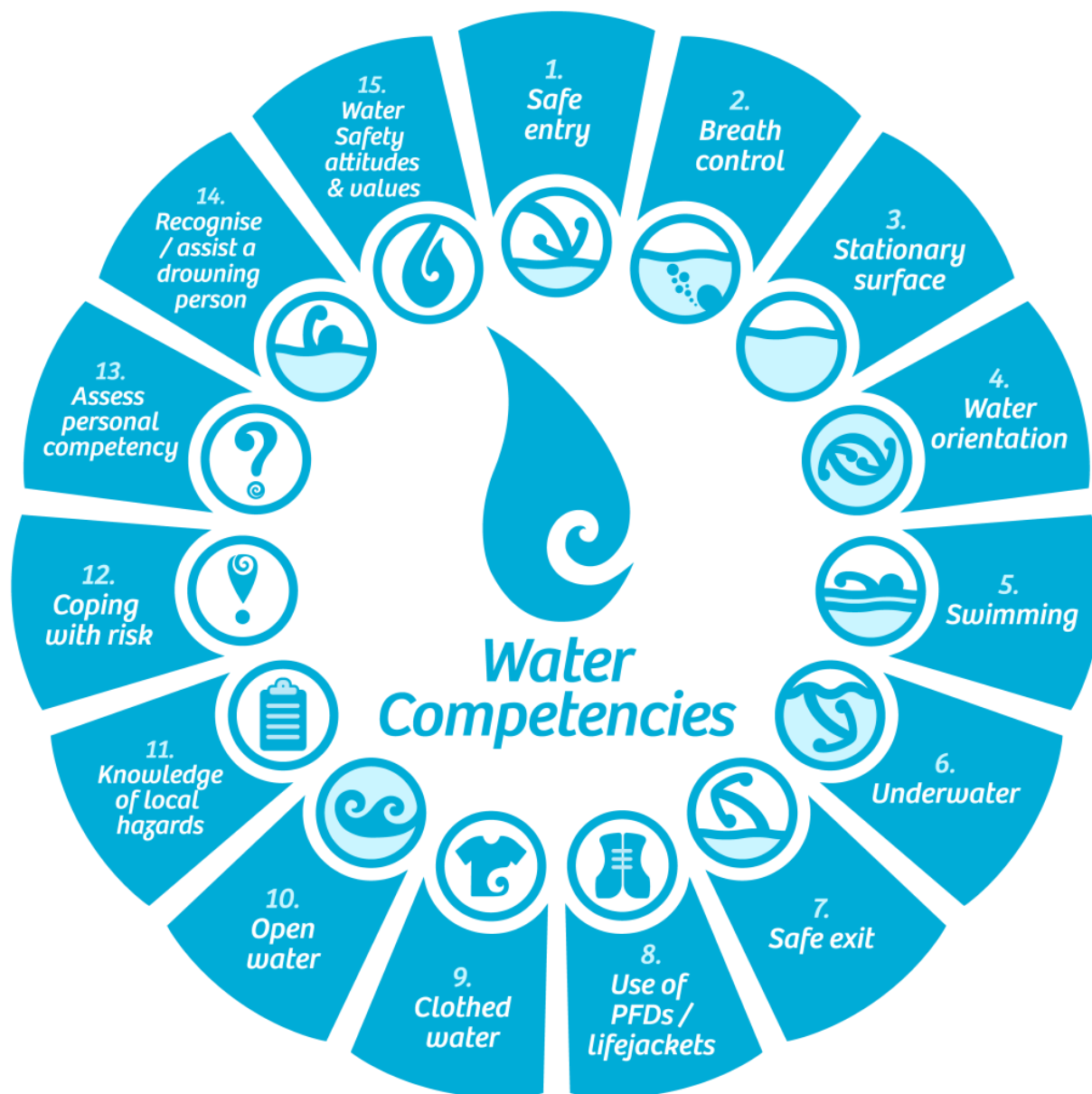
Commit to providing quality aquatic education...*to better protect (tamariki and rangatahi) from the dangers of being active in the water, while motivating them to engage in aquatic activities in the long-term.*

(Potdevin et al, 2023)



15 Water Competencies

- **Skills**
- **Knowledge**
- **Attitudes**
- **Behaviours**



DPA Resources

Teacher resource and guide

WAI SURVIVAL

An aquatic education resource
for secondary schools

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Free

Adult Water Safety

See more...

Free

안전한 바위 낚시 (Safer Rock Fishing in Korean)

See more...

Free

更安全的矶钓 (Safer Rock Fishing in Mandarin)

See more...

Free

Early Childhood Water Safety

See more...

Free

Water Safety for Children

See more...

Free

Safer Rock Fishing

See more...

Free

Tikanga Marutau Wai Mō Te Hapori Māori

See more...

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Water Safety E-Learning Teaser

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Water Safety for Youth and Young Adults

See more...

Other Resources



Watch how to Cross a River Safely Video [↗](#)

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/learn/skills/river-safety>



<https://eonz.org.nz/eotc-management/fatality-prevention-mindset/>

How to Stay Safe around Rivers

More people drown in rivers than in any other aquatic environment in New Zealand.

Rivers are changeable and unpredictable particularly after heavy rainfall.



<https://www.watersafetynz.org/river-resource>

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Through a range of innovative and enjoyable learning opportunities we can help you, your whānau, your community and workplace to be safer around water.

For further information:

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