



“Korero Mai, What’s On & Whakaaro Pai” 20—OCTOBER, 2011

A newsletter for those interested in the provision of services for people with experience of mental illness, articles from Service Users/Tangata Whaiora and “What’s On” - promoting educational and recreational activities for under \$5.00 per event.

Included in this Issue:

Self Stigma and Self Discrimination Workshops	2
“Turn the Page” Tee shirts for sale	2
Christmas Card specials	2
World Mental Health Day	2
MH Awareness Week 2011 proposed programme	3
“What’s On” for September 2011 Issue 51	4
“Whakaaro Pai” for September—Issue 32	6
Real Arts Support Group at Real Tart	6
Article and poem by Pete	6
Therapy in “Turning the Page” article by Kevin Brown	7
‘Brand vs Generic’—article by Tony Spencer	8

Coming Events: October, 2011:

Wednesdays: “Real Arts” 10-3pm at Real Tart—Gold Coin only
 Thursdays: “Mental Health Matters”—Access Radio 104.4FM 9.30am. Tune in—Hosted by Like Minds Taranaki

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK 2011

Mon 3rd: Self-Stigma Workshop, NP, free, ring 759-0966
 Mon 7th: Launch—“Turn the Page” Project, ring 759-0966
 Mon 3rd: Public presentations, 5.15pm Baptist Church, NP—FREE, ring Like Minds Taranaki, 759-0966
 Tue 4th: Karaoke, Dance, Social, Hawera—ring 757-5549
 Wed 5th: Scrapbooking Workshop—NP ring 757-9300
 Wed 5th: Public presentations, 10.30am, STDC Comm. Theatre Lounge, Hawera—FREE, ring 759-0966
 Thur 6th: Self-Stigma and Self Discrimination Workshop, Hawera, FREE, ring 06-759-0966
 Mon 10: World Mental Health Day
 Mon 3rd: Motivation with a difference, ph Peter 06-762-4838
 Wed 5th: International Day of Older Persons—Kaumatua Day, Owae Marae, ring Esther, 759-7303
 Fri 7th: Term 3 ends—life starts again for teachers
 Wed 12th: Focus/Support Group—ring 759-0966
 Thur 20th: Creative Writers Support Group ring 759-0966
 Sun 23rd: Final—World Cup—Auckland—NZ vs ???
 Mon 24th: Labour Day—have a well deserved day off
 Thur 22nd: “Mates” Outreach 2.30pm at Progress to Health
 Tue 25th: Term 4 begins—life begins again for parents
 Thur 27th: 5pm, Taranaki CAG meeting



Editorial:
Midlands Health Network and Puke Ariki Libraries are literally on a winner!

“TURN THE PAGE – Tahuri atu te Whārangī”

Puke Ariki and District Libraries have totally embraced this project – drawing on the popularity of the concept overseas. For Midlands Health – it means that their GPs have another option to assist their patients with mild to moderate mental illness, and best of all – for people with mental health problems – it provides the opportunity to learn more about their mental health and to learn to manage their recovery and on-going mental wellness—in their own time and at their own pace.

Libraries have invested in their range of books and these are being well used by people already being referred to recommended books by their GPs.

The project will gradually increase to include other areas of mental illness such as Alcohol and Drugs, gambling etc.

Ideally soon the little logos that libraries have for indicating what a book area is eg ‘mystery’, ‘non-fiction’, ‘humour’ etc will now be able to have a “Turn the Page” symbol/logo.

“Turn the Page” as a project, is still in its infancy – however – will now be widely marketed on using a variety of media and social networks.

“Turn the Page” is a great ‘win-win’ project all round. It is expected the project will rapidly expand further afield in Taranaki and elsewhere.

The organising committee of this year’s Mental Health Awareness Week are pleased to be able to promote the “Turn the Page” project as the theme of this year’s celebrations.

Gordon Hudson, Coordinator, MH Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week— 3 - 7th October.
See page 3 for details of the programme.

Self-Stigma and Self-Discrimination Workshops now available...

Stigma and discrimination affects all areas of society and is particularly prevalent in mental illness.

Statistics reveal that a third of people experiencing mental disorders will battle on alone and avoid seeking help, because the stigma associated with being diagnosed with a mental illness is too great.

People who do seek help and are diagnosed with a mental illness often find themselves labeled as being "mentally unwell" and run the real risk of believing (and internalising) the stigma so common in society. Internalised (self) stigma is particularly challenging for people living with an experience of mental illness because it compounds conditions already being experienced, namely poor self-esteem and poor self-worth.

Like Minds Taranaki has put together an interactive workshop for people living with an experience of mental illness. Participants gain an understanding of the disempowering effects of internalised stigma and learn simple tools to counter its effects, supporting the choice of new beliefs to promote mental wellness.

Two 3 hour workshops will be offered as part of the programme for Mental Health Awareness Week – one in NP on Monday 3rd and one in Hawera on Thursday 6th Oct.

For more information and to register for this free workshop, please contact **Like Minds on 06-759 0966.**

Employment : Taking the first step...

A guidebook for jobseekers with health issues.
Free copies available from Like Minds Taranaki.

Christmas Card Special—packs of 8 + envelopes, only \$5.00 per set. From Like Minds Taranaki—mental.health@xtra.co.nz or 06-759-0966



These works are part of a community art initiative promoting mental health awareness 

World Mental Health Day, 10th October.

World Mental Health Day raises public awareness about mental health issues.

The day promotes more open discussion of mental health disorders, and investments in prevention and treatment services. The treatment gap for mental, neurological and substance use disorders is formidable, especially in poor resource countries.

Physical and mental health are intertwined. There is a real need to deal with mental health problems of people with chronic physical illnesses and physical care of mental health consumers through a continued and integrated care.

Check out: www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz

WITT Quiz success...

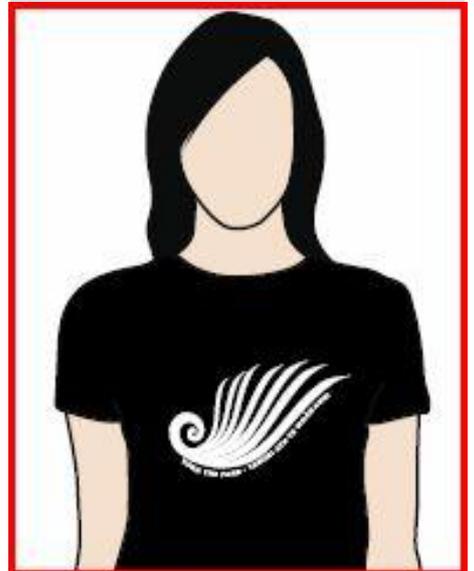
To kick off this year's Mental Health Awareness Week, WITT held a Student's Quiz based on the Like Minds Taranaki www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz website.

11 teams and 45 participants competed—lot's of fun, lots of learning.

Thought for the Month...

If bees disappeared, the whole food chain would be at risk, because one third of everything we eat depends on honey-bee Pollination.

For Sale: 'Turn the Page Tahuri atu te Whārangī' Tee Shirts...



Just \$15.00 waged
\$10.00 unwaged
Contact Like Minds Taranaki—
06-759-0966
or email: mental.health@xtra.co.nz
Only 30 left
All sizes available

**New Crisis Team
Free Number is here...
Ring: 0508ASSIST or
0508 277 478**

**For sale: "Seeds of Hope" Tee Shirts
Top quality—Sizes L and 4XXXX
\$10.00 only
Contact: Like Minds Taranaki.
06-759-0966
mental.health@xtra.co.nz**

Mental Health Awareness Week 2011

'Turn the Page' 'Tahuri atu te Wharangi'

PROGRAMME:

LAUNCH—"TURN THE PAGE" - Tahuri ate te Whārangī—Midlands Health Network and Puke Ariki Libraries are literally onto a winner.



Puke Ariki Libraries have totally embraced this project – drawing on the popularity of the concept overseas. For Midlands Health, it means that their GPs have another option to assist patients with mild to moderate mental illness and best of all – for people with mental health issues, it gives them the opportunity to learn more about their mental health and to learn to manage their recovery and on-going mental wellness.

Monday 3rd October—12noon—Puke Ariki Library – (fully booked)

WORKSHOP ON SELF-STIGMA & SELF-DISCRIMINATION—NP—FREE

Monday 3rd October—10.00am-1.00pm—New Plymouth—limit—15 people
Please register with Like Minds Taranaki—06-759-0966 or mental.health@xtra.co.nz

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS—NEW PLYMOUTH—ALL WELCOME—FREE

Monday 3rd October—5.15pm—Baptist Church, Liardet St, New Plymouth

Dr Chandrasekaran Ramamurthy, TDHB—"Anxiety"

Andrew Brock, Relationship Manager, Midlands Health Network

& Dale Cousens, Librarian, Puke Ariki—"Turn the Page" Initiative

Gordon Hudson, Like Minds Taranaki—"Stigma and Discrimination in the Workplace"

Contact Like Minds Taranaki—06-759-0966

DANCE/SOCIAL/KARAOKE/BBQ – HAWERA—FREE

Tuesday 4th October—10.30am-1.30pm – please contact Progress to Health – 06-757-5549

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS—HAWERA—ALL WELCOME—FREE

Wednesday 5th October—10.30am-12.30pm—STDC Theatre Lounge, Albion St—Hawera

Sandi Cummings, Problem Gambling Foundation—"Help is available"

Suicide Prevention—"Let's start the conversation and step up the action"

Otago University Mental Health Clinicians and Like Minds Taranaki

Taranaki DHB—"Mental Health & Addictions Services in South Taranaki"

Contact Like Minds Taranaki—mental.health@xtra.co.nz or 06-759-09-66

SCRAPBOOKING WORKSHOP—NP—GOLD COIN DONATION

Wednesday 5th October—10am-1pm—St Andrews Church Hall, Liardet St, NP
Limited to 20 people—contact Supporting Families in Mental Illness—06-757-9300

WORKSHOP ON SELF-STIGMA & SELF-DISCRIMINATION—HAWERA—FREE

Thursday 6th October—10am-1pm—Hawera—limit 15 people
Please register with Like Minds Taranaki—06-759-0966 or mental.health@xtra.co.nz

BOOK OF AFFIRMATIONS will operate throughout activities

Taranaki Mental Health Awareness Week 2011

is supported by a wide range of organisations providing effective services for people experiencing mental illness.

Sponsors include:

Healthcare NZ, Like Minds Taranaki, Midlands Health Network, Pathways, Progress to Health, Puke Ariki and District Libraries, Taranaki DHB Mental Health & Addiction Services, Te Whare Puawai o Te Tangata Trust, WITT - Western Institute of Technology, Taranaki.

For more information, contact Like Minds Taranaki, Tel: 06-759-0966

Email: mental.health@xtra.co.nz

www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz



Supported by the TSB Community Trust

WHAT'S ON NGĀ KAUPAPA O TE WĀ

Issue 51—Compiled BY people on limited incomes FOR people on limited incomes...
Please place on a notice board somewhere where people on limited incomes will notice it...

OCTOBER 2011

- 10Sep-27Nov** **Len Lye: All Souls Carnival**—Govett-Brewster Art Gallery—10am-5pm. This features Len Lye's film, painting and kinetic sculptures—a dazzling choreographed exhibition of sound, light and movement. and is part of the ['REAL New Zealand Festival'](#). **FREE**
- Until 14th Dec** **It's Not Just a Game**—Whanau, Whakapapa, Whutupaoro—Puke Ariki Main Gallery. The tales and taonga of tribal rugby and visitors will also find period lounges, with wallpaper and couches from days gone by, a clubroom starring stories of Taranaki All Blacks, a shearing shed and a rugby shower/locker room. 'It's Not Just a Game' is about whole communities and families and their loyalty to tribes, clubs and communities. **FREE**
- 3rd—7th Oct** * **Mental Health Awareness Week 2011** *
- Mon 3rd Oct** **Self-Stigma & Self-Discrimination Workshop, NP**—10am-1pm—Limited to 15 people, learn about self-acceptance—please register with Like Minds Taranaki—06 759 0966. **FREE**
- Mon 3rd Oct** **Public Presentations**—Baptist Church, Liardet St, NP—5:15pm. Sponsored by the TDHB with talks on "Anxiety" by Dr Chandra Ramamurthy - the "Turn the Page" initiative by Andrew Brock from Midlands Health and Dale Cousens, Librarian from Puke Ariki, Gordon Hudson, Like Minds Taranaki is presenting on "Stigma & Discrimination in the Workplace" Contact LMT for more details—06 759 0966. **FREE**
- Tue 4th Oct** **"Cheap Eats" Book Launch**—Cancer Society Meeting Room, 71 Lorna St, 10am. Come for a cuppa and take some copies away of this free, basic, economical and easy to use food resource for the people you help in the community. Please RSVP to Elaine on 06 769 5066. **FREE**
- Wed 5th Oct** **Public Presentations**—STDC Theatre Lounge, Albion St, **HAWERA**—10.30am-12.30pm. Presentations from Sandi Cummings – Problem Gambling Foundation – "Help is available", Suicide Prevention – "Let's start the conversation and step up the action" by Otago University Clinicians and Like Minds Taranaki and the Taranaki DHB – "Mental Health & Addictions Services in South Taranaki" **FREE**
- Wed 5th Oct** **Kaumtua Day—International Day of Older Persons**—Owae Marae, North Street, **WAITARA** Po'iri (welcoming) 9am. A day of recognition and celebration of our elders, regardless of colour or creed. Many activities including Tai Chi, Sit Fit Boxing, Line Dancing, Kapahaka and also Health Services available. Make a plate to share and come and make this day a special one for all. For more details contact Esther at Mahia Mai A Whai Tara on 06 759 7303 **FREE**
- Wed 5th Oct** **Scrapbooking Workshop**—St Andrews Church Hall, NP—10am—1pm. Breathe new life into an old card or photo of yours. Limited to 20 people—contact Supporting Families on 06 757 9300. **FREE**
- Thur 6th Oct** **Self-Stigma & Self-Discrimination Workshop—HAWERA**—10am-1pm—Limited to 15 people, learn about self-acceptance—register with Like Minds Taranaki—06 759 0966. **FREE**

School Holidays—Last day of Term 3 is Friday 7th October with school resuming Tue 25th October
Govett-Brewster Art Gallery runs an **Art Programme** on Tue, Wed & Thur at \$5 per session—bookings essential—contact Chris Barry at 06 759 6060 to register, and call your **local library** for details of the many events run during the **school holidays**...
Op Shopping ! – A wonderful and cheap way to either recycle or buy any pre-loved items of clothing or bric-a-brac – a great one to visit with a high turnover of items is the Hospice Shop on David St. Cheap fun!

"What's On" is emailed to over 300 organisations in Taranaki and sent on to 100s more via their email networks and displayed on many notice boards etc. It has become quite wide-reaching and could be worthwhile for you to consider using it to promote your educational and/or recreation activity – if it is free or \$5 or less.



Support Group— Theatre Lounge, Hawera Community Centre, Albion Street, **HAWERA**—10am—12pm. Meeting fortnightly, this group is for those who suffer or have suffered from anxiety and depression. It's a chance to share and help support others in a relaxed environment. For more information contact Tom Gibson 06 7646417. Tea and coffee provided. **FREE**

Touched By Suicide Support Group—Meets every third Thursday of the month from 7pm-9pm. Held at 83 Hine St, this group is led by trained facilitators and offers care, understanding and support to anyone affected by the loss of a loved one through suicide. Any further enquiries phone Jo on 021 027 369 35 or Tiaki on 06 757 9300. **FREE**

South Taranaki Touched By Suicide Support Group—Meets the first Thursday of the month from 7pm-9pm in the Theatre Lounge at the Community Centre in Albion St, **HAWERA** Any further enquiries phone Jo on 021 027 369 35 or Tiaki on 06 757 9300. **FREE**

Post Natal Support Group – 1st & 3rd Wed of each month at the Women's Centre 10-12pm. For more information phone Like Minds Taranaki on 06 759 0966. **FREE**

Bipolar Condition Support Group—A friendly, informal small group meeting weekly in part of the old Barrett St Hospital on Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm. If interested please contact either Darren on 758 8918 or Kathryn on 751 1390. **FREE**

Wed 12th Oct Wildlife Rescue and Recovery—A Public Talk—Level 2, North Wing Puke Ariki—7-8pm. Listen to a Penguin expert talk of her experiences in the NZ Wildlife Health Centre. **FREE**

7th & 8th Oct 24 Hour Booksale—TSB Stadium—Friday 12pm to Sat 12pm. Bargains to be had with prices of books starting at 50 cents per book. Proceeds to go to the TSB Showplace. Entry is **FREE**

Sun 16th Oct All Souls Carnival—Dance workshop—As part of the Len Lye: All Souls Carnival this is aimed anyone who would like to dance along with the Len Lye sculptures... **FREE**

Thur 20th Oct Creative Writers Group – 2pm-3pm at Like Minds Taranaki offices, 3rd floor, 50 Devon st West – for people with experience of a mental illness—monthly meetings. Contact 759 0966 **FREE**

Mon 24th Oct Labour Day Public Holiday: – don't labour! – relax...

28Oct-6thNov MORE FM Fringe Garden Festival—Showcases gardens and their related arts and crafts. With over 50 gardens on display! A programme can be picked up from your local garden centre, all i Sites and libraries. Some gardens are **FREE** or **Gold Coin** with the most expensive just **\$2**

28Oct-6thNov Powerco Taranaki Garden Spectacular—Formerly known as the **Taranaki Rhododendron and Garden Festival** this is a celebration of gardeners and gardens with some of the most outstanding gardens, parks and open spaces. For more details www.taft.co.nz/gardenfestnz/ or call 0800 RHODOFEST (0800746363) Various Garden fees apply.

Sun 30th Oct Tupare Garden Walk—487 Mangorei Rd, 2:30pm. A walk and talk with Mitch Graham covering the planning and operation of the Russell Avenue landscape project. **FREE**

This space could be used to promote one of your events, please contact Stephanie Mapley at Like Minds Taranaki

We are very keen to hear of events from Central, Coastal and South Taranaki - ring us on 0800-454-536

The next "What's On" will be in late October for November, let us know what is different, fun & almost free...

Mon,Wed,Fri BoxFit Taranaki Classes—50 Rimu St—5:30pm. Bring a towel and water. **\$2**

Every Tue Womens Only BoxFit Class in **WAITARA** at the Waitara War Memorial Hall (theatre room) from 12.30pm - 1.30pm, Bring a towel and water **\$4**

Mon&Thur Yoga at the Women's Centre—Every Mon at 5:15 pm and every Thur at 10:30am. **\$5**

Every Tue Tai Chi at the Women's Centre—Community House 32 Leach St.—1:30pm **\$5**

Every Wed Real Arts—10am-3pm at Real TArt Community Gallery—a great opportunity for people with experience of mental illness or other disabilities, to participate in art and craft. Call Gordon on 759 0966. **GOLD COIN**

Every Thur Relax at Lunch—Gentle yoga, breathing techniques and relaxation with awareness—12:30—1:30pm—Community House 32 Leach St, bring mat, blanket & cushion. **GOLD COIN**

Every Thur 'Mental Health Matters' - Access Radio 104.4FM—9:30—10am. Every Thursday. Like Minds Taranaki are the hosts of this show discussing a wide range of special interest topics and topical events. Contact us at 759 0966 if you have any queries concerning any of the issues raised. **FREE**

Every Fri Creative Space – Art and craft for people with a disability—83 Hine St, 9am-4pm. **GOLD COIN**

Every Fri Whizzy Walkers— Meet at Plunket House at 10am. A walking group which has been formed specifically for caregivers who would like to join others in a brisk walk with their child and buggy for about an hour - a great way to make new friends while staying active. **FREE**



A random amble through the life and rhymes of

Pete the catholic, dyslexic, bi polar unemployed pommie man.

An exposition at the Real Tart gallery, New Plymouth, for the month of October.

These are just some of the labels that others have attached to me on my journey through life. They shaped and moulded me in to a person that was not me; a person that hid from society in shame and in fear. In guilt and in pain. But I would dwell in that pain, often barely alive, because I knew the answers I needed to get back my truth where hidden deep in the fog of my subconscious. I stopped running from the demons that had been chasing me all my life, to be honest I had nowhere left to run. Once I came face to face with my pursuers I could tame these demons and they transformed into my faithful guide dogs that led me blindly on my journey home to meet the boy of my youth, still lost and shy but this time we could learn to live in love not fear. We see every day now as an exciting challenge to learn and grow. We can learn the truth about what amazing beings we all are.

I choose now new labels; Father, Surfer, Artist, Poet, Hunter and Free Spirit. The only external evidence of my transformation is a light in my eye, a spring in my step and a smile on my face.

I am still challenged daily living my truth, walking unfamiliar ground. My broken heart and mind keep trying to relive the past, should pain return or confusion of mind, I know I have stepped from my path once again; my guides soon lead me back. My heart and mind are healing.

I moved to New Plymouth in a desperate hope that I might be able to build a life from nothing. Here I was told people are supportive of the arts and individuality. I have definitely found this to be the case. I am surrounded by beautiful people who reflect Aroha back at me and catch me should I falter. I am growing ever more steadfast in my new found truth as I learn to love and honour myself and my journey.

Aroha nui,

Pete

like minds
hau rite o
TARANAKI
PHONE: 7590966 (LIKE MINDS)
OR
7695717 (REAL TART)

REALARTS

Wednesdays 10-3.30pm

@ Real TART Gallery

FACILITATED BY:
KORRENA KIDD

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH CREATIVITY

The Real Tart Gallery is kindly supported by Peter and Rosemary Tennent and family, The Devon Hotel, Marbles Buffet, Yarrows the Bakers, TSB Community Trust
All catering provided by the Devon Hotel

**For people with experience of mental illness—
and/or other disabilities**

With Korrena, Stacey and Karen

Gold coin donation for coffee and small charge for materials...

Sponsored by: like minds
hau rite o
TARANAKI

Contact Gordon, 06-759-0966

Tall Poppies

Tall poppy, small town, narrow mind.
It's tough living with ignorance you will find.

They wish to hack away at your roots,
As you have bare feet and they their boots.

Intent on cutting you down,
To dislodge your imagined crown.

You may choose to walk away,
Fight to love another day.

Better to rise above and move beyond,
Unleash the power of your magic wand.

And their judging to forgive,
And change the world in which you live

Where body heals and spirit frees,
And all you know are tall poppies.



Therapy in Turning the Page

My memory of how long I endured this phase of my life is fuzzy. Depression does that. Days run into each other without anything changing. Each day my time was wasted as I let myself become ensnared in the trap of depression. I had been captured before but never to these depths of hopelessness.

My strategy to cope was isolation, I only ventured past the letter box when necessary.

My anxiety would be heightened when people visited, on this occasion it was my brother. He was acutely aware of my low mood and the time I wasted watching senseless TV. He suggested that I check out the library as a book would have to be more beneficial.

I meditated on the idea and headed down to the library. The paranoia kicked in and my anxiety grew. I truly believed people were aware I had issues. I found two books and headed home.

I began reading that very afternoon. Although I had difficulty processing the content at first, as I read on, things started to change. Instead of a mind full of my own thoughts I was able to meditate upon the story.

The more I read the more I enjoyed. My mind was being filled with new pictures and I became encapsulated and immersed in the adventure that was penned within those pages. Almost immediately I became a ravenous reader, I would read in bed at night until almost asleep.

Next morning I would awake with intrigue and continue on reading. This pattern of reading books

began to take up most of my time, and I had plenty believe me.

I was able to let go of the negative non-stimulating thoughts that had set up permanent camp in my head. My thoughts were now afresh and as I read, I believe my brain clicked back into gear and things started moving forward after such a long time stuck in neutral.



This was the beginning of a new journey. I continued to frequent the local library over the next few months and I would latch on to an author then read all their series of books. I can say that this was when I literally turned the page in my book of wellness and life.

The steps throughout my recovery from depression were not always easy to find or follow and the processes I encountered are unique. But piece by piece I was able to regain ownership of my life from that lonely time over a decade ago.

I have re-established meaningful relationships, which in turn has led to permanent employment as a mental health peer support worker. I am able to draw upon lived experiences to help others through their individual journeys.

My journey and the challenges of life continue. But I would not be the person I have become today if I had not endured the fight against my biggest oppressor, mental illness.

Kevin Brown

Coming Soon on Access Radio...

9.30am,

During October:

6th: Suicide prevention

13th: Repeat of above.

20th: Self Stigma

27th: Repeat of above



Mental Wellness Groups

Like Minds Taranaki hosts regular support and discussion groups, where you can share your stories and experiences with others who are also on the journey to recovery. Enjoy a friendly, relaxed atmosphere and speak with complete confidentiality.

You can also benefit from writing and arts groups that allow you to tap into your creative side.

**NEW PLYMOUTH
GROUP TIMES AND LOCATIONS
Contact Like Minds 06-759-0966**

Discussion Group:

2nd & 4th Wednesday each month

10.30 am—12 pm

Taranaki Disability Information
Center

Creative Writing Group:

3rd Thursday each month

2—3 pm

Like Minds Office
3rd Floor New Stirling Sports Bldg.
Devon Street West

Post Natal Support Group:

Alternate Wednesdays

10 am

New Plymouth Women's Centre
32 Leach Street

Thought for the Issue:

Sometimes I feel the whole world is against me. But deep down I know that's not true. Some smaller countries are neutral.
Anon.



Brand vs Generic

Trust is the magic ingredient in the relationship between psychiatrist and service user. If you are able to trust that you are being given the best advice, and the best medication for your condition, you are more likely to follow their recommendations.

Trust in the medications you are prescribed is also very important. In the case of psychiatric medications, you are taking a drug that has an effect on the chemical reactions taking place in your brain.

Something as small as a pill has the power to regulate the functions of that most complex of "computers." This is a marvel of modern science that has improved the quality of life for myself and many others.

Pharmaceutical companies that manufacture these medications, must go through a process to earn trust in their products. When a new medicine is created, it must go through a rigorous testing process to ensure its safety and effectiveness. Any possible side effects are well documented before the drug is approved for mainstream use.

This initial process of drug formulation and testing is expensive. Because of this, when a drug company produces a new medication they are able to patent it—they alone have the rights to the product for a period of up to twenty years, and this monopoly helps them to recover the costs of its development.

After the patent on a brand name medication has expired, its active chemical ingredient becomes available for use by other pharmaceutical companies.

Because these outside companies have spent less on the development and production of their version of the medication, they are able to pass these often substantial savings onwards to the end consumer—the final price doesn't have to be as high for them to make a profit.

These new versions of brand name medicines are called 'generic.' Generic drugs go through their own testing process to ensure that they work - and can be trusted - in the same way as the brand name product, being identical in:

- Dosage and strength (within certain tolerances)
- How it is taken
- Safety
- Efficacy
- Intended use

While the core chemical compound of a generic product is the same as that found in the original version, due to trademark protection a generic drug must look different from its brand equivalent. Other aspects of the medication can also differ.

There is more to a pill than its active ingredient. Something weighing 25 milligrams alone, for example, would be difficult to see let alone take.

Other substances must be added to the active ingredient in order to make it usable. These additional

substances include colouring agents, and inactive ingredients commonly known as fillers.

Generic medications use a different formulation than brand name ones. As well as different dyes to make it a different colour, a generic medication may also contain different—possibly more—fillers to make up the rest of the pill.

This is something to be aware of; although the majority of consumers may not notice any difference from the brand name equivalents, some may experience new side effects after switching to generics.

There is a small chance that the new inactive ingredients in a generic medication, be they dyes or any of the fillers it contains, may trigger allergies that were not present when taking the original product.

Due to the difference in formulation, for some people the generic medication may not perform as well as the original. This could be due to an interaction between its ingredients, or because the new pill dissolves at a different rate.

For most consumers, the same trust can be placed in generic medications as brand name products.

It is still prudent to watch for any side effects or symptoms for a while after making the change, and inform your health professional if you notice any difference.

Tony Spencer