



“Korero Mai” **WHAT'S ON** **Whakaaro Pai**

for those interested in the provision of mental health services

providing educational and recreational activities for \$5.00 and under

for Service Users/Tangata Whaiora by Service Users/Tangata Whaiora

Issue 40 JULY 2013

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakalofa lahi atu, Talohani, Bula vinaka, Ni Hao, Namaste, Greetings...

Initiative by farming couple gives help to those in need

By GORDON HUDSON
Urenui farmers Linda and John White feel so strongly about the appalling suicide rate among farmers they have taken action to educate others.

They have initiated a brochure to help increase awareness among rural people about dealing with stress and depression – their own, and among their families and friends.

Both John and Linda wanted to tell their story to raise awareness about mental distress in rural people – so that farmers become aware of the symptoms, so that they know where to go for help, and most of all, to emphasise the importance of seeking professional help when things turn to custard on the farm.

Continued on Page 2

Pathways to offer places of rest, hope and healing

Three new short-stay services are to provide further community-based options for Taranaki people experiencing challenges to their mental health.

At some point or another, everyone needs a breakaway from the “every day” of life to rest and relax in a warm, peaceful environment. For people experiencing the effects of mental illness, these breaks are especially important. It has long been recognised that supported time out – usually termed “respite” – can help prevent further distress and can sometimes reduce or remove the need for a hospital admission.

The team from Pathways is in the process of setting up three additional respite services that will be available to the people of Taranaki – two in New Plymouth and one in Hawera. “Pathways respite services are



Denise Aylward: Focus is on home-like environment.

designed to support people in their recovery,” says Denise Aylward, Pathways’ General Manager for Midlands. “We focus on providing a warm and home-like environment, providing people with nourishing food, time to rest and quiet, safe conversation. The aim is to support people both in their immediate need and in developing longer-term resilience.”

The three new services have been contracted to Pathways by the Taranaki District Health Board after an open tender process. Referrals to the services will come via DHB teams.

Continued on Page 3

Coming Events: JULY 2013

Every Wed:	Real Arts at Real Tart, NP, 1-4pm
Every Thur:	“Mental Health Matters” Access Radio 104.4FM, 9.30am
Every Sat:	Thinking Differently, The Most 100.4FM, 10am
Wed 3 & 17:	Post Natal Support Group at NP Women’s Centre, 10am-12 noon
Thur 4 & 18	Peer Support Group at Stratford Community House, 10am
Wed 10 & 24:	Wellness Group at Like Minds, 10.30am-12noon
Mon 8 & 22:	Peer Support Gp, 164 Princes St, Hawera, 10am
Thur 18:	Writers’ Support Group at Like Minds, 2pm (this month’s subject: “The Sea”)
Thur 27:	Mates Men’s Meeting, 15 Dawson St, NP, 2-4pm

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Farming couple believes part of answer is education

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Linda is particularly keen to see more support for family/whanau in times when a family member is under severe mental distress – particularly when that person is still vulnerable to ongoing stress, anxiety and depression. She and John feel so fortunate that they have, as a strong family unit, been able to survive the traumas that they have faced. They feel for those families who live further away from professional mental health services and support, and for those families who do not have the ability to provide support for each other.



Their plan...

To develop, print and circulate 1000s of leaflets to raise awareness, provide information and to advertise how and where to seek professional help. The cover of the leaflet developed by Linda and John is simple and effective.

Their target...

Rural people attending rural events – starting with the Mystery Creek Field Days in Hamilton.

Their message...

To emphasise that suicide is not the answer to problems. It is a permanent

solution to a temporary problem and that it is a strength to seek professional help – not a weakness.

Sadly, only 2 out of 3 people with a mental illness actually seek professional help. The reason many give for not doing so is that the perceived stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness would be worse than the symptoms of their mental illness. This situation has to change.

Part of the answer...

Linda and John feel that more education is the key.

The support...

Linda and John approached Like Minds Taranaki for support, and

manager Virginia Winder was keen to help. Like Minds Taranaki had just received a donation from the Urenui Lions Club and was able to use this generous donation to cover printing costs. Somewhat poignantly, Linda's father was a founding member of this club.

The Taranaki Suicide Prevention Coordination Group too was keen to support with a similar donation from funds donated by Paula Ingram. Paula shaved her hair during Mental Health



Linda White: "In 2009, my family and I thought our world would end. The husband and father we loved dearly had tried to take his own life.

Fortunately, we are some of the lucky ones, so far, but we know it is still a daily battle for him. Farmers are independent and find it difficult to ask for help.

By putting my face to this, and speaking out, I want to bring attention to this epidemic so that others won't have to go through the heartache that we did - or worse."

Awareness Week 2012 and raised substantial funds that were donated to this group and to Like Minds Taranaki.

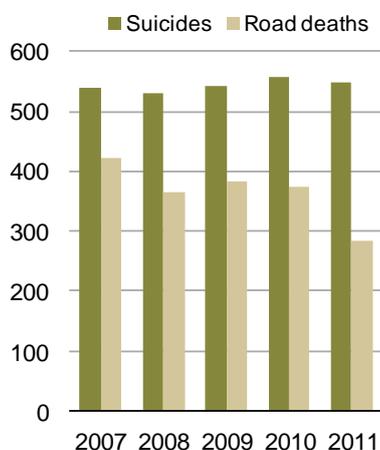
Clearly, this has been a local initiative, one that was well received by so many key organisations associated with rural communities. Interestingly, the innovative work of Like Minds Taranaki was acknowledged by many of these key organisations.

Our thanks to Linda and John for their outstanding initiative, and for using their personal experiences about living and coping with serious mental distress on the farm – a situation that affects everything they and their family do.

It is a much needed initiative too, because in Taranaki, the person most at risk of suicide is a middle aged male farmer with experience of mental illness. Federated Farmers and Like Minds Taranaki have additional copies of these rather hard hitting leaflets and are keen to share these.

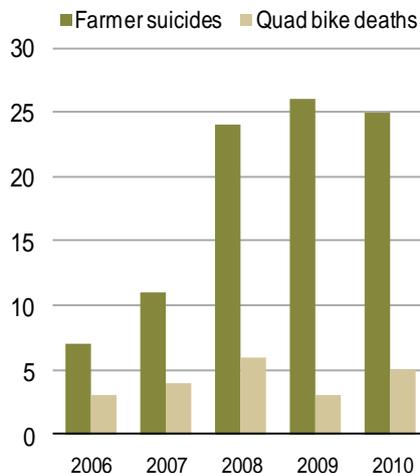
In NZ, on average, one farmer completes suicide every two weeks

The road toll has been decreased by education and information.



Suicides: Office of Chief Coroner
Road deaths: Ministry of Transport website

And a similar outcome is being mooted for Quad Bike deaths...



Suicides: Farmsafe Leaders Forum March 2011, Chief Coroner, Judge Neil McLean
Quad bikes: Ministry of Labour website

Places of rest, hope and healing for many

From Page 1

The Hawera service and one of the New Plymouth services are for adults aged 18-65 and will offer people both planned and crisis stays.

In an exciting addition to local options, the other New Plymouth-based service will be focused on young people, and will be delivered under the "Real" brand.

Real is a service for the young people of New Zealand – a service that is all about creating wellness and wellbeing, about life and living it well," Denise says.

"We believe that by

supporting young people in a way that recognises their uniqueness, fewer will go on to need adult mental health and addiction services later in their lives."

Pathways delivers similar Real wellness retreats to young people in Whanganui and Auckland.

The local team is excited about extending the successful model to the Taranaki region.

"We deliver youth services under the Real look and feel because it is more approachable for young people than the more traditional

Pathways brand," she says.

"It was developed with young people for young people – and they've told us it works for them. We're incredibly excited about being able to deliver a Real wellness retreat in Taranaki, because we know it's needed – and we know it works really well for the young people we support."

For more information on Pathways go to www.pathways.co.nz. For more information on Real check out www.real.org.nz.



Mental health campaigner Sir John Kirwan has been voted the person New Zealanders trust the most. The rugby coach and former All Black gets our vote!

RuralSupport

Farmers helping farmers... and doing it well.

"When circumstances beyond your control lead to a rural crisis - be it financial, climatic or personal - the Taranaki Rural Support Trust is ready to assist."

Stopping elder abuse is our responsibility

By GORDON HUDSON

Elder Abuse Day 2013 has come and gone but the problem lingers on.

It is time to put an end to elder abuse in our community and two Taranaki organisations play a leading role – Age Concern and Te Hauora Pou Heretanga.

Both organisations do great work – but their success depends on people like you and I having the courage to report abuse in all its forms.

Doing so would put an end to instances like the one recently reported about an elderly woman who was kept on a couch or tied to a foot stool for three years and denied exercise and proper medical attention.

Where were the other four siblings, nephews and nieces in this whole sorry saga?

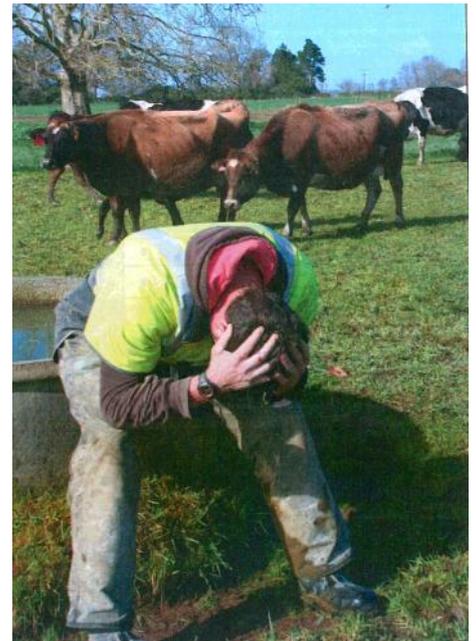
And on another level again...

More recently, it was reported that renowned cook Nigella Lawson was seen being assaulted by her millionaire husband in a packed restaurant and not one customer or staff member came to her aid.

We already know child abuse is rampant, goes unreported and leaves emotional scars forever—let's not get to that stage with elderly abuse.

Nigel Christie, manager of Te Pou Heretanga, challenges us to not let fear of involvement or meddling in someone else's business stop us from voicing our concerns or taking action when we see a situation in which someone is being abused.

The least we can do is report such elder abuse to Age Concern 06-759-9196 or Te Hauora Pou Heretanga – 06-759-7303.



All trust members are rural people with local knowledge and experience...

Harvey Leach	06-764-8333
Derek Gibson	06-752-7642
John McMurray	06-756-7099
Graeme Hight	06-754-4404
Hannah Dent	06-757-3423
Paul Bourke	06-761-8895
Blue Read	06-752-3698
Katrina Knowles	021-831-944
Dave Hopkins	06-757-3423
Office:	06-757-3423

Power of sharing your stories

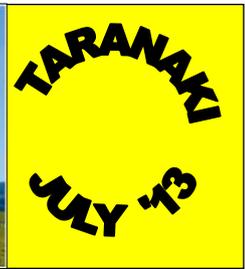
We want to hear stories about people's journeys to wellness or from specialists with tools and tips to share.

In the column, Mindful Ways, published fortnightly in the *Taranaki Daily News*, we aim to inspire, motivate and show the strength,

resilience and creative minds of people with experience of mental unwellness.

If you have information or a story to share, please contact Like Minds Taranaki manager Virginia Winder on 06 7590966, or 0800 454 536 or email mental.health@xtra.co.nz.





Supported by the TSB Community Trust

WHAT'S ON NGĀ KAUPAPA O TE WĀ

Issue 71— *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...

JULY 2013

Until Aug 25	Etched in Brass - Puke Ariki - Through the stories of brass bands in New Plymouth and throughout New Zealand the exhibition celebrates the ceremony, and commitment of those involved to make music accessible to everyone. The exhibition coincides with the NZS National Brass Band Championships, from July 17-21 which will see Taranaki welcome 30-35 bands from around the country and possibly overseas. FREE
Jul 14 until Nov	Thirty-Six Views of Mt Taranaki - Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Open Window. Auckland-based artist Balamohan Shingade invited 36 people on a one-day journey by coach, from dawn to midnight, travelling from Auckland to Mt Taranaki and back. Each participant was asked to respond with a material contribution to the day, the journey and the mountain. Opening a year to the day of this journey, these 36 offerings are represented in a revolving exhibition for Open Window, six artworks at a time, shown for three weeks each. FREE
Mon Jul 1,3& 5	Te Reo Māori For Beginners - Puke Ariki - 12-1pm. Classes will focus on ngā Māori (Māori names). This class is suited for beginners who want to learn correct pronunciation and basic meanings of local place names. FREE
Thur Jul 4	Mental Health Matters - Access Radio 104.4FM —9:30-10am. Cecily Bull from Like Minds Taranaki interviews Post-natal Support Group co-facilitator Sarah Darke. FREE
Fri Jul 5	Hui-A-Toi: Scrumbling - Puke Ariki - 10am-12pm. Come and get crafty with like-minded people and learn new skills. These regular sessions take place the first Friday of every month. All welcome, whatever your experience level, and all materials are supplied. Scrumbles are little fragments of knitting and crochet, made without rules or patterns - freeform crochet. FREE
Fri Jul 5	Levity Beet - Oākura Community Library, OAKURA - 10-11am. Come along to this original and energetic performance by Levity Beet, children's songwriter, performer and musical instrument inventor entertaining children across the region with his fuzzunkafone and other instruments made from things that are often mistaken for trash. FREE
Fri Jul 5	Levity Beet - Bell Block Community Library, BELL BLOCK - 2-3pm. <i>As above.</i> FREE
Sat Jul 6	Levity Beet - Puke Ariki - 2-3pm. <i>As above.</i> FREE
Jul 6 & 7	Te Kupenga Stone Sculpture Society Open Day/ Club Weekend - 9am-4pm. A unique facility which showcases stone carving in a variety of sizes and styles. Come and meet the artists and watch their works progress. FREE
Fri Jul 12	Govett-Brewster Seniors@ Puke Ariki - Puke Ariki - 9:30-11:30am. While the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery is closed, Puke Ariki is delighted to welcome the gallery's monthly Seniors' discussion group. Join Operations Manager Helen Telford for a conversation about the art of display at Puke Ariki. Meet for coffee at 9:30am if you like or come in for the 10am start. Bookings essential - phone 06 759 6060. FREE
Sat Jul 13	Herekawe Walkway Planting Day - Herekawe Walkway - Back Beach. Meet at the lower Back Beach car park at 1pm. Sausages and drinks provided afterwards. Do your bit to make this undiscovered walkway even better! FREE
Sun Jul 14	Tupare Gardens - Elizabeth Garden Design Project 3 - 2-4pm. The final workshop in this practical series. The newly designed and prepared area will be planted up. FREE

"What's On" is emailed to almost 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—Held at Tui Ora Ltd, 164 Princes Street **HAWERA**—10am-12pm, Monday and 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. This month's meetings are July 8 and 22. **GOLD COIN**

Peer Support Group—Community House, 52 Juliet St, **STRATFORD**—Every second Thursday, (July 4 & 18) 10am-12pm. For people and families with mental health and/or addiction issues. This peer-led group provides an opportunity to meet with other people who have shared similar experiences. Come and talk, listen to each other, have some fun and offer each other coping strategies towards recovery. For further information, please text or phone Mihi at Tui Ora Hawera office 06-278-6603 or Kevin at Tui Ora NP 06-759-4064. **GOLD COIN**

Post-natal Support Group (Peri-natal)—1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10am—12noon. This group is open to all mothers experiencing post-natal distress and is held in the Women's Centre, Community House, 32 Leach Street (at the end of the car park next to the YMCA) Child care is available. For more information on this group contact Like Minds Taranaki on 759 0966, or TDHB Peri-Natal MH team: 753 7749. **FREE**

MATES Men's Meeting—Groups held at 45 Regent St, **HAWERA** on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month 7-9:30pm and at TDIC, 28 Young St **NP** on the 2nd and last Thursday of the month 7–9:30pm. There is also a group aimed at men living with the challenge of mental health issues and held on the last Thursday of every month at Progress To Health, 15 Dawson St, **NP** 2-4pm. **FREE**

Tue Jul 16 Epilepsy Seminar - Community House, 32 Leach St. - 10am-12pm. Covering what is and what causes epilepsy, recognition of seizure types, first aid for seizures and many more issues in dealing with this condition. **FREE**

Wed Jul 17 Photographic Memory: Say Cheese! Puke Ariki - Main Exhibition Gallery - 6-7pm. Come along and share your photographic memory stories with Curators Charlotte Sate and Ruth Harvey over crackers and cheese. Arborio will be open for drinks. **FREE**

Thur Jul 18 Nelson City Youth Brass Band - Puke ARki Library Entrance - 12-1pm. A performance as part of the Etched in Brass exhibition. **FREE**

Fri Jul 19 Tea and Topics: Insurance And Valuations Demystified - Puke Ariki - 10-11am. Enjoy a cuppa and a bikkie while picking up some top tips from local experts in their field. These regular information sessions are now taking place on the third Friday of every month. **FREE**

Fri Jul 26 Hochstetter Lecture - Dr Mark Quigley - Puke Ariki - 6-7pm. Dr Quigley will talk us through the geologic and geomorphic impacts of the 2010-2012 Canterbury Earthquake Sequence and local evidence of large prehistoric earthquakes. **FREE**

School Holidays Last day of term 2: July 12 First day of term 3: July 29 All activities **FREE**

Tue 16 Mask Making Fun - Bell Block Library - 10:30am-12pm. Bookings essential: phone: 759 6060.

Tue 16 Activity Table - Puke Ariki - 1-4pm. Come and try out the craft activity anytime between 1 & 4pm.

Wed 17 Let's Make Music - Waitara Library - 2-3pm. Try some unique instruments and become part of a rhythmic circle. Bookings essential - 759 6060.

Wed 17 Storytime and Crafts - Oākura Library - 10-11am. Bookings essential 759 6060.

Wed 17 Let's Make Music - Inglewood Library - Share the beats! Bookings essential 759 6060.

Thur 18 Activity Table - No booking necessary - come and try a craft activity anytime between 1 & 4pm.

19 - 21 Lantern Making Workshop - 1pm-4pm each day. Create a colourful lantern ready to join in the parade on Saturday August 17. Bookings essential - 759 6060.

Sun 21 6 Hour Comic Book Challenge - Puke Ariki - 10am-4pm. Basic paper, pens, pencils and markers are provided. Bring your creativity, own lunch and any special materials you want to use. Ages 13-17. Bookings are essential - phone 759 6060.

Thur 25 Mid-Winter Madness - Inglewood Library - 10:30-12pm. Crazy crafts and silly stories - come along and let your creativity go wild. Bookings essential: 759 6060.

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

Every Tue Active in Age Programme—TSB Stadium—10am-12pm—Tai Chi session 11-12pm. **\$3**

Every Wed Real Arts—1pm-4pm at Real TArt Community Gallery—an opportunity for people with experience of illness to participate in art & craft. Call Virginia oh 759 0966. **GOLD COIN**

Every Fri Tai Chi—Stratford War Memorial Facilities Room, Miranda St, **STRATFORD**—9:30-10:30. **\$5**

*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 or email us here at Like Minds Taranaki at mental.health@xtra.co.nz*

The next "What's On" will be in late July for August



Artist dedicates 100 days to drawing moods

By VIRGINIA WINDER
Sarah Darke is finding inspiration and comic relief through ink and paper.

The Taranaki artist has joined the online 100 Days Project and is creating a visual Mood Diary to reflect her day.

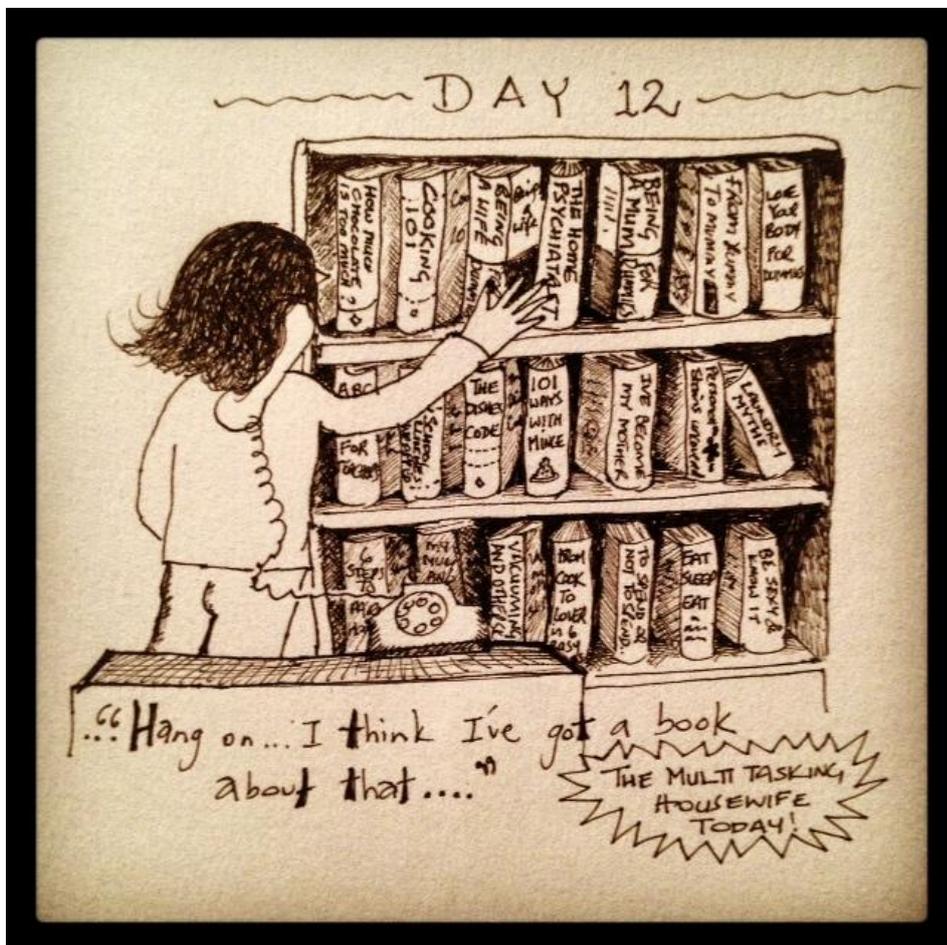
"I love to doodle and draw cartoons," Sarah writes. "I have never published my cartoons and caricatures, they are often quite personal."

Sarah, who helps run the Like Minds Taranaki post natal support group, says she has joined the project to motivate herself artistically.

"Someone sent me the link on Facebook and I thought that it would be a good way to make me do something because I haven't done much since my exhibition last year," says the mother of two. "It's forcing me to do something every day because that's my passion. I do think in pictures."

Each day she simply creates a line drawing of how she feels on the day. "It's quite cathartic, but quite challenging."

Sarah says her daughter is the one



driving her to draw and each night they discuss what the picture means.

"I think it will be quite a cool visual story at the end of it."

The creative challenge was started in 2011 by New Zealander Emma Rogan, who is featured in a TED Talk.

This year's project began on June

7 and about 700 people from all over the world are registered.

The projects range from finger drawing to poetry, photographic portraits to making chairs, bleaching black velvet to living with mental illness (check out 100 Quirks) – and a whole lot more.

To follow Sarah's progress, go to <http://100daysproject.co.nz/>

Getting The Most out of thinking differently...

Like Minds Taranaki is Thinking Differently.

Every Saturday morning people can tune in to 100.4FM The Most FM at 10am to find out about those amazing people who have contributed to the world because they think differently.

Imagine humanity missing out on the likes of Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, Vincent van Gogh, Tim Finn or Stephen Fry?

Along with featuring a well-known person who has experience of mental illness, Like Minds Taranaki manager Virginia Winder will also be sharing tools or tips to help people think differently about their own mental wellness.

Here's something we've already shared: Thoughts are not facts, they are simply what your mind is saying or creating at any given moment.



They may be based in factual events, but they are simply the mind thinking. Thoughts flow through our minds just like music or talk on a radio station and we can tune out or we can focus on them. Sometimes those thoughts will lead to wonderful ideas; to daydreams about goals, creative imaginings and insightful actions.

Other times, we find ourselves immersed in the past – and if you are remembering happy times, that's fine.

Sometimes though, our thoughts turn to bad things, and we find ourselves going over old regrets and unhappiness. Or they may zoom into the future and we find ourselves imagining terrible things happening, or we focus on worries and get afraid of what the future holds.

Take time to just look or listen to your thoughts... imagine them floating by, just like clouds.

Don't judge them as good or bad, welcome or unwelcome. If you hook a stray thought, examine it for a few seconds, then let it go and float off.

The more you practice this exercise in watching your thoughts the easier it will be to see them for what they are... just thoughts, not facts.



It's our turn next



It's time to get organised now to go digital.

With the move to digital just around the corner on the 29 September, there is not much time to go and it's best to start thinking about what is required.

Community Adviser Robin Winter says: "It's really important to check the equipment you already have before you purchase anything. That might mean a set-top-box or a new aerial."

"However, if you have any questions or need advice, feel free to get in contact with me or ring 0800 838 800," Robin says.

To talk directly to Robin Winter, call her on 027 540 2314, or email her on robin.winter@goingdigital.co.nz. For further information you can also go to www.goingdigital.co.nz or call 0800 838 800.

Coming Soon on Access Radio...



"Mental Health Matters"

July

Every Thursday 9.30am.
This month Cecily Bull interviews Sarah Darke



9.30am
every Thursday of each month

Thought for the Issue:

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."
- Vincent van Gogh

Hawera support group:

The venue at Tui Ora Ltd at 164 Princes Street, Hawera, is ideal, if a little cramped... (the down side of success!)

Next meeting—July 8 & 22

Held alternate Mondays 10-12 noon, and ably facilitated by Tom Gibson—06-764-6417. Give him a call...

STRATFORD SUPPORT GROUP...

For people and Families/Whanau with mental health and/or addiction problems.

Every second Thursday (July 4 & 18) 10am-12pm. Contact Mihi 06-278-6603 or Kevin 06-759-4064.

Held at the Stratford Community House, 52 Juliet St., Stratford.

Employment:

Taking the first step...

A 64-page guidebook for jobseekers with health issues.
Free copies available from Like Minds Taranaki.



Your experience as a mental health consumer has value—you could help improve the quality of care provided not only in Taranaki, but throughout New Zealand.

If you're interested in making a difference, why not join the Taranaki Consumer Advisory Group?

Meetings held from 10am-11am, at Harmony House, 83 Poplar Grove, on the last Friday of each month.

For more information please email: tcag@hotmail.co.nz
or call Tony Spencer on: 759 0966

Expressions of interest for...

Self-stigma and Discrimination 2-hour workshops

Contact Cecily Bull at Like Minds Taranaki
06 759 0966 or 0800 454 536

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 noon

Like Minds Taranaki Office
3rd Floor Brougham House
50 Devon Street West

Creative Writing Group:

3rd Thursday each month
2—3 pm

Like Minds Taranaki Office
3rd Floor Brougham House.
50 Devon Street West

Real Arts Group:

Every Wednesday
1—4.00pm

Real Tart Community Gallery
19 Egmont Street, NP

New Support Group...

Post-natal Support Group (Peri-natal Support Group)

10-12noon

1st and 3rd Wednesdays
of each month

At the NP Womens Centre

This is a supportive non-clinical group offering support.
Child care available.

For more information contact:
Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966
NP Womens' Centre 06-758-4957
TDHB Peri Natal Team
06-753-7749



Spending Mindfully

We all want to feel a sense of choice and control over our lives. Rather than having to drift along with the current dictated by daily life, we want the resources to be able to chart our own direction.

If the average person captains a metaphoric boat on the sea of life, then money is the motor that gives us this freedom to choose our destination.

Some people find themselves isolated and adrift, barely able to keep their boat afloat let alone choose where they want to go. Due to poverty, daily life is a struggle for too many in today's society.

Lack of education is one possible predictor of poverty, as our growing knowledge economy sees qualifications becoming more important. Perversely, the costs of tertiary education are beyond the financial reach of many families.

A link also exists between poverty and mental illness. Many with experience of mental health issues find themselves reliant on the welfare system to survive financially.

You can survive on diet of rice alone for instance, but add a few ingredients and that same rice becomes something you can truly savour.

Mindfulness is like a secret ingredient for the money you're living on—it has the potential to make the experience of spending

it more enjoyable, and may even help you spend less.

According to Dr. Jan Chozen Bays, author of "How to Train a Wild Elephant & Other Adventures in Mindfulness," one thing that's important to remember is that life isn't always meant to be comfortable.

We've all heard of the saying "retail therapy," but in reality when we're encountering feelings of emotional discomfort, there's no way to buy ourselves out of those feelings.

Whether we spend that money on material things, or on food or drink in the belief that it will make us feel better... In all likelihood this will just add to our problem in the form of additional expense.

By being mindful and trying to focus on the moment at present, we can allow ourselves to live through feelings of uncertainty and discomfort. Rather than searching in vain for something to distract us or fill in some perceived void, we should accept that this is a natural part of life experience.

Not placing too great an expectation on what to feel after we've bought something, can actually help us to enjoy it more because we can experience it in its true form. We're more likely to feel that we've spent our money wisely.

"Do I really *need* to buy this?" It's a question we should ask ourselves, so we can distinguish between what would be 'good to have' and what is essential to us.

Too many of the things we buy feel as if they would be great to own at the time, and end up sitting on a shelf gathering dust soon after we've bought them. Value is more than just how much something costs, but how much use we can get out of it once we own it.

Avoiding purchases of things we don't need, means we've got more money available for those expensive items that we actually do need.

One tool that can help us reduce spending on nonessential items is called *urge surfing*. Rather than give in to the urge to buy something immediately, we can resist that temptation and pay close attention to the way that it feels.

We may be able to resist the need to buy something in the same way someone that's quitting smoking would resist the need for a cigarette. We can "ride out the wave" of chemicals in our brain that triggered the impulse to buy something. After doing this, we can look at the situation in a rational way and ask ourselves a simple question:

"Is it really worth it?"



Tony Spencer

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