



“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 41 AUGUST 2013

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

Mike King has tough tale to tell Taranaki high school students

By VIRGINIA WINDER



A self-confessed bully who nearly lost his life to drugs is heading to Taranaki for Suicide Prevention Week.

Comedian Mike King (pictured) will be in the region during the second week of September to share his life-changing story with high school students and the general public. With him will be former rugby league player Tai Tupou, who runs a boot camp-style fitness business called R.I.P.E.D Training to empower people to feel good through exercise and diet. Both men are from The Key to Life Charitable Trust, originally created as The Nutters Club Charitable Trust in 2010.

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Lessons to learn from low show on wellbeing index

By VIRGINIA WINDER
Taranaki people aren't flourishing, connecting, learning or exercising enough.

That's according to the inaugural Sovereign Wellbeing Index released in mid-July following a comprehensive survey carried out by researchers from the Human Potential Centre at the Auckland University of Technology. Of the eight categories the research report covers, Taranaki was at the bottom of the bunch in half and average in the rest – depressed mood, social position, giving and taking notice of surroundings. Instead of taking a knee-jerk reaction and saying "what a load of rubbish, I'm OK thanks", we can learn from the results, embrace the five "Winning



Taking notice of your surroundings adds to your wellbeing.

Ways to Wellbeing" and do better. Firstly, we can take heart that people in Taranaki are honest. And next, we need to ask ourselves – what can we do, as a community and individually, to improve the wellbeing of the people in our region? How can we flourish? "People who are flourishing have supportive and rewarding relationships, actively contributing to the happiness of others, lead purposeful and meaningful lives and are engaged and interested in their activities," the report says. The research shows that in New Zealand, older, female and wealthier people recorded the highest flourishing scores.

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Coming Events: AUGUST 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 7 & 21:	Post Natal Support Group at NP Women's Centre, 10am-12 noon
Thur 1,15,29	Peer Support Group at Stratford Community House, 10am
Wed 14 & 28:	Wellness Group at Like Minds, 10.30am-12noon
Mon 5 & 19:	Peer Support Gp, 164 Princes St, Hawera, 10am
Thur 18:	Writers' Group at Like Minds, 2pm, (Subject: random choice from the Story Spinner website)
Thur 29:	Mates Men's Meeting, 15 Dawson St, NP, 2-4pm

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Inspirational speakers head to Taranaki

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Their visit is being organised by the Taranaki Suicide Prevention Co-ordination Group (TSPCG), which is also bringing Riders Against Teenage Suicide (RATS) and the Super Maori Fullas to the region on September 14. TSPCG chair Fi Szpetnar-Perez says Mike and Tai will be speaking to high school students and at two community events starting at 7.30pm. The first is on September 10 in the Stratford War

Memorial Hall and the second on September 11 in the former Waves building on Powderham St, New Plymouth.

People going along to hear Mike King shouldn't expect to see the bullying funny man from days gone by. Instead, they will be faced with an inspiring and passionate presenter with personal experience of mental health and addiction issues.

"To the world he was successful, but inside he was a crumbling mess held up by drugs and alcohol. Then he had his epiphany – you can't run from yourself," Fi says.

"He's not a soft speaker. He's pretty hard-hitting and he makes no excuses for it, but he's not the brash foul-mouthed comedian – that was his former reputation. And he cares." This year's theme for Suicide Prevention Week is "accepting differences", which also fits with the RATS event.



Key to Life: Tai Tupou (back) and Mike King will be teaming up to talk to teens in Taranaki during Suicide Prevention Week.

"There are a lot of misconceptions around motorcycle riders – we see a big group of them and we have negative thoughts."

That won't fit those taking part in the mass Green Ribbon ride to raise awareness about preventing youth suicide and that "it's not OK to go that way".

People from all over the North Island will be riding and she encourages Taranaki folk to join in.

"We are hoping to have between 100 and 200 riders."

Among the riders will be anti-domestic violence

campaigners the Super Maori Fullas, who support the RATS' suicide prevention kaupapa.

Fellow TSPCG member Teresa Gordon says after the Saturday ride, the bikes will be on show at The Green by the old railway station on Matai St in Inglewood from 1pm to 4pm.

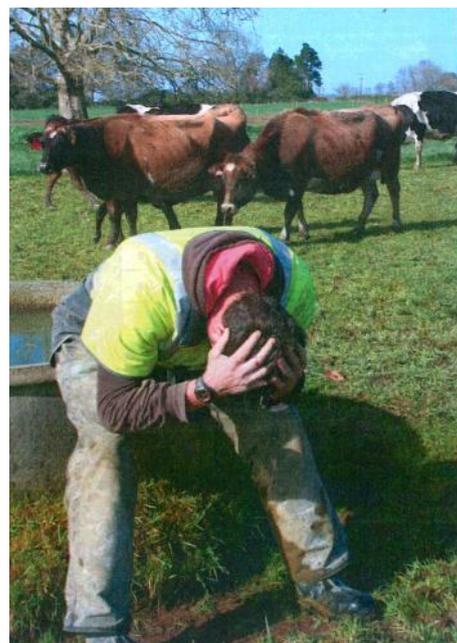
The afternoon outing will include live music, a kapa haka performance, speakers, a coffee cart and a BBQ. Mental health providers will also be on hand to talk with people and share resources.

"It's so people know where to go for help and can put a face to the provider's name," says Teresa, also programme manager for the New Plymouth Injury Safe Trust. Providers interested in being involved can contact her at teresa.gordon@tdhb.org.nz and riders wanting to know more can contact Fi at tspcg@hotmail.co.nz

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."



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

Healing 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 illness.

So far, we have heard about the power of peer support, learnt about art therapy, found out about tools to keep memories intact, discovered the "yahoo factor" and a way through drug and alcohol addiction. If you have information or a story to share, please contact Like Minds Taranaki manager Virginia Winder on 06 759 0966, or email mental.health@xtra.co.nz.



Big heart: Karen Wehle from Harmony House shared her story.

Some farmers on 'suicide watch'

By GORDON HUDSON

Farming is a difficult all-encompassing business at the best of times – as aptly portrayed by a Letter to the Editor of the *Taranaki Daily News* by a J. Ward at the end of July.

One of the few major pressures that J. Ward did not mention was the increasing stress compliance costs were causing some farmers.

Nowhere is this as apparent as in the Manawatu Whanganui Regional Council (MWRC) area where the Council's "One Plan" requirements ask farmers to reduce farm-nutrient loss, to improve fresh water quality and boost biodiversity in the region.

And this is so necessary as the region's rivers and water supplies have been recorded as among the worst in new Zealand.

However, the council has been forced to admit some of its One Plan requirements are unachievable.

The council has stated that in the meantime, no farmer will be stopped from intensive farming after it heard that some were on "suicide watch" over its proposed environmental regulations. MWRC chairman Bruce Gordon says that this announcement is designed to alleviate some of the pressure on those who are "stressed to the max".

The council, he says, had to do something to give farmers certainty, and to give them a reason for getting out of bed and going to work in the morning.

No one can deny the need for improving the pollution affecting New Zealand waterways – both urban and rural – however, even the best-intended regulations are not always practical and achievable in proposed time frames.

So many of our businesses today, farming included, are being crippled by local, regional and central government, which are inhibiting growth and creating undue hardships on organisations as they struggle to achieve what seems like endless bureaucratic red tape.

Farming is already a high-risk, stressful business and any bureaucratic requirement or regulation that makes it more so, is something that should be treated carefully.

And if a regional council admits that some of its proposed changes are unachievable and are creating severe stress among some of its farmers, to the extent that the council has placed some farmers on "suicide watch", then it is high time that this bureaucracy introduced some realism into their idealism.

Tiredness has big affect on teens' moods, mental health

By GABRIELLE WARD

A new study on teenagers and their sleep has shown a relationship between fatigue and mental illness.

In the United States, research looking at a national sample of teenagers aged between 13 and 18, showed that 3% reported having prolonged fatigue lasting a minimum of three months, and around half of these adolescents also had a mood or anxiety disorder.

These health problems are also associated with inadequate mental and physical health. The study carried out by Kathleen Merikangas and colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland, analysed data from 10,123 teenagers. Results indicated 1.4% reported having prolonged fatigue and 1.6% reported having both fatigue and a depressive or anxiety disorder.

"This suggests that the presence of fatigue may be used in clinical practice as an indicator of a more severe depressive or anxiety disorder," Merikangas wrote.

Overall, adolescents with both prolonged fatigue and a depressive or anxiety disorder also had the worst health of any group.

Teenagers with both disorders were more likely to indicate that they had fair or poor mental health, which was 27.1% of the sample; fair or poor physical health 32.1%; social phobia 33.5%; and substance abuse disorder 36.4%.

Time to connect, learn, give, take notice, get active

Continued from Page 1

There was little difference in flourishing scores among ethnic groups across the country, but social position was a strong indicator of wellbeing. "Those higher on the social ladder reported much higher wellbeing," the report says.

The study found that people's wellbeing tended to increase with income, but it also confirmed that five free actions (Five Winning Ways) contributed to higher wellbeing.

These are connecting, giving, taking notice of surroundings, learning, and being active.

The 25% of people who came out with "Super Wellbeing" scores were also likely to have better general health, be non-smokers and exercisers, and have healthier diets and weights.

"One of the most striking – and concerning – results was New



Prof Grant Schofield:
Surprised to see NZ ranking so low.

Zealand's low placing in international wellbeing rankings," a press release from AUT University says. When compared with surveys of 22 European

countries using the same set of measurements, New Zealand consistently ranked near the bottom in personal and social wellbeing – far behind the Scandinavian countries in the lead.

"The worst comparative result was in connecting within our communities – only a quarter of us felt close to people in our local area, sending us to the very bottom of the table."

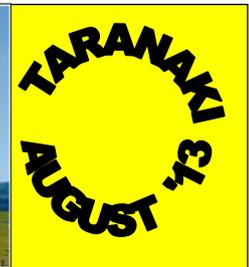
It was a huge surprise to see New

Zealand ranking so low, says study leader Grant Schofield, professor of public health at AUT University.

"I hadn't expected New Zealand to be the best, but I hadn't expected we'd do as badly as we did. I think it comes down to our comparative lack of social connectedness and the fact that the gap is growing between the haves and the have-nots. We're not the even and fair society we once thought we were," Professor Schofield says.

"We need to start having discussions about the New Zealand we want to be, and how we can start to achieve that." The index is drawn from an AUT survey last year of 9962 randomly selected New Zealanders aged 18 and older.

It will continue to monitor the wellbeing of New Zealanders, and benchmark with the European results, over the next four years.



Supported by the TSB Community Trust

WHAT'S ON NGĀ KAUPAPA O TE WĀ

Issue 72—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...

AUGUST 2013

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 Mon	Table Tennis - 7:30pm - Scout Hall, Calvert Road - A wonderful way to warm up over winter. Come along and play this fun sport that anyone at any age can play - it's a great family sport. You can pay \$20 for a years membership(senior)\$10(junior)and then pay only \$1 per night or you can pay as a casual per night:	\$2
Every Fri	Tai Chi —Stratford War Memorial Facilities Room, Miranda St, STRATFORD —9:30-10:30.	\$5
Every Fri	Whizzy Walkers — Meet at Plunket House at 10am. A walking group specifically for caregivers who would like to join others in a brisk walk with their child and buggy for about an hour.	FREE
Every Sun	New Plymouth Joggers and Walkers —Pukekura Park Cricket Pavilion—8:30-9:30. All ages and abilities catered for with different groups for an hours walk or jog.	FREE
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.	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
3 until 23 Aug	Tales from Tibet - exhibition of Tibetan carpets - Percy Thomson Gallery, Miranda St, STRATFORD - Mon-Fri 10:30am-4pm, Sat, Sun 10:30am - 3pm. Each hand-knotted carpet is the product of a skilled Tibetan refugee weaver's craftsmanship, and represents the fair trading relationship between Trade Aid and their Tibetan producer partners in India and Nepal. The carpets are truly works of art. All the carpets are for sale.	FREE
Thur Aug 1	Mental Health Matters - Access Radio 104.4FM —9:30-10am. Cecily Bull from Like Minds Taranaki interviews Suicide Prevention Day co-ordinator Fi Spetnar-Perez.	FREE
Fri Aug 2	Hui_A_Toī: Mini Canvas Embroidery - Puke Ariki 10am-12pm. Come and get crafty with like-minded people and learn new skills. These free, regular sessions take place on the first Friday of every month. All welcome, whatever your experience level, and all materials are supplied. Stitch or embroider mini canvases that can be easily turned in to badges and brooches. Come along and give it a go.	FREE
Sun Aug 4	Pukeiti - Explorer Bug Day - Pukeiti - 10:30am-2pm. Bring your kids and learn about some of the creepy crawlies at Pukeiti.	FREE
Fri Aug 9	Govett-Brewster Seniors - Meet at the Taranaki Daily News Cafe, Puke Ariki at 9:30am and the Helen joins the group at 10am. Come for a conversation about art on display at Puke Ariki. Bookings are essential, phone 06 759 6060.	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.



- Fri Aug 9** **Computer Skills for Communication and Social Development** - For people living with a hearing loss - **STRATFORD** District Library - Every Friday for 8 weeks - 10am-12:30pm. This course is also about encouraging the deaf and hearing impaired community to get out and not live isolated lives. They will be introduced to staff at the library who will get to know them over the 8 week period. Places are limited so please **RSVP** by **August 2** to reserve a place, email: niki.jenkinson@deaf.org.nz or call 021 556 989. **FREE**
- Wed Aug 14** **Local Alcohol Policy Get Involved with Doug Sellman** - Hatherly Hall, St Mary's Cathedral - 7:30-8:30pm. Discussing two of the main interests in recent years which have been evidence-based national advocacy for alcohol law reform, and research on food addiction and its role in recovery from obesity. **FREE**
- Thur Aug 15** **Art to Lunch - Tiffany Singh: What is the colour of the breeze?** - 2nd Floor, Brougham House, 52 Devon St. West - 12:15pm. Join artists and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery curators for a short talk about the current art projects. Bring your coffee and lunch. Held on the third Thursday of each month and this month's talk is discussing the above exhibition. **FREE**
- Sat Aug 17** **TSB Community Trust Lantern Parade** - Puke Ariki Landing - 6pm. This parade is one of the highlights of the Taranaki International Arts Festival. This year's theme is 'Colour the Streets' so bring along the lantern you've made and join the procession. **FREE**
- Aug 17 & 18** **Call Of Taranaki: Reo Karanga O Taranaki: Panel Discussion** - Puke Ariki - 11am and 2pm each day. Join the two panels of exhibition artists and curator Darcy Nicholas as they discuss who they are, what inspires them and their Taranaki connections. **FREE**
- Aug 17 - Sep 1** **Call Of Taranaki: Reo Karanga O Taranaki: Visiting Artists** - Puke Ariki - 10am - 4pm each day. Kōrero with the exhibition artists or watch them work. There is a change of artist every couple of days. **FREE**
- 24 & 25 Aug** **Call Of Taranaki: Reo Karanga O Taranaki: Fashion Show** - Puke Ariki - shows at 11am and 2pm each will showcase the kākahu/garments featured in the exhibition. **FREE**
- Sun Aug 25** **Spring Planning Workshop** - Hollard Gardens, **STRATFORD** - 2-4pm. Learn how Hollard Gardens prepare for spring in Bernie's Home Garden and get some ideas of what to plant next year for some different ingredients. Bring seed to swap. **FREE**
- Fri Aug 30** **Top Of The Shots Opening Night** - Percy Thomson Gallery, **STRATFORD** - 7:30-9pm. Come along to the opening of the Swainson/Woods Collection at Percy Thomson Gallery and vote for the photograph that you think should be Stratford's 'top shot'. **FREE**

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 August 5 and 19. **GOLD COIN**

Peer Support Group—Community House, 52 Juliet St, **STRATFORD**—Every second Thursday, (Aug 1,15,29) 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**

Peer Support Group - For people and families/Whanau with experience of mental illness. Held on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month (August 2 & 16) at St James Church Hall on Lawry Street. This peer-led group will provide an opportunity to meet with other people who understand - and who share similar experiences. Morning tea is provided. For further information please phone Kevin or Bronwen at Tui Ora Ltd on 06-759-4064. **GOLD COIN**

*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*



Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - "keep positive, see it through"

'Bugman' turns cars into creative creatures

By VIRGINIA WINDER

People call him "The Bugman". But John Wyndham-Jones is no Ruud Kleinpaste or wing-wearing superhero – he's an artist.

The New Plymouth man customises Hot Wheels cars, especially Volkswagens, and adds vibrant butterfly or dragonfly wings, wire legs and feelers to create his own wild "bugs".

So far he has made dragonflies, moths, flies, butterflies and even spiders.

It all began through humour. John is part of an online forum of collectors promoting New Zealand, putting Kiwi themes on things, including the miniature cars.

"The bug was having a bit of a laugh with a Veedub collector," he says.

He customised his first Hot Wheels car into a creature back in 2009 and has continued collecting cars (not just VWs) and searching for wonderful wing designs on the web. "I print the wings and then strengthen them and clear cut them and add to the vehicle," he says



Flights of fancy: John Wyndham-Jones with some of his creatures.

flicking through a folder of designs he's brought along to the Like Minds Taranaki Real Arts group, held every Wednesday.

He doesn't just come for the art. "I come down for the camaraderie,

the social network – it's bloody good company. It's people doing something positive, rather than sitting drinking booze and moaning about the world."

He sells his work through the Real TArt Gallery where the art group is held and he also take orders.

Right now he's turning tiny Veedubs into bug brooches and looking at morphing a miniature Mustang into Pegasus.

"This is my occupational therapy and whether they sell or not is irrelevant – it's the hurdles I have to overcome in creating them," he says.

"The first ones I did, the wings broke off so I found a better way."

So far, John has made about 30 different bugs, which have attracted a great deal of positive comments.

If you are keen on a John Wyndham-Jones creature creation, please contact him on toyman@slingshot.co.nz.

And if you want to join the Real Arts group, held each Wednesday from 1pm to 4pm at the Real TArt Gallery, please contact Like Minds Taranaki on 06 759 0966.

New peer support group aims to build social networks

By VIRGINIA WINDER

Tui Ora has started a new peer support group in New Plymouth.

The group, held on the first and third Friday of each month, is being facilitated by consumer advocates and peer support workers Kevin Brown and Bronwen Phillips.

"The importance is that like-minded people can get together and share their experiences," Bronwen says. "Some of us are on better levels of recovery and we have insight about what helps to get to the other side."

She and Kevin are aiming to create a social network for people to make friends outside the clinical world, regardless of background or culture. "For a lot of people, the only contacts they have are on a professional basis."

Kevin says that when he was at his most unwell – in the late 1990s and early 2000s – there was no peer support in place.

He began working in the mental health service in 2005, and has found that on a professional basis, peers with their own experience of mental illness have been a great support.

"Bronwen and I are good support for each other," he says.

Both say it all comes down to trust and safety. "That's the basis for the start of our



Peer pair: Bronwen Phillips and Kevin Brown know the power of peer support.

group and we emphasise confidentiality and respect," Bronwen says.

Kevin continues: "Trust in our role is the biggest thing we have to establish when meeting a person and we put them at ease by saying that we are tangata whaiora (people working towards wellness) – that breaks down barriers immediately."

Sharing that they have their own lived experience of mental illness also reduces anxiety in peer support work, including in the new group.

"Anxiety is such a stifler of growth and confidence," Kevin says.

Everybody who attends the new group will be warmly welcomed and helped to feel

comfortable. Even though Kevin and Bronwen are the facilitators, they are allowing the group to be self-directed.

"But we do plan to get people out doing things as well," he says.

Activities may include walks, visits to galleries and to Pukekura Park.

"I believe nature is a big healer," he says. Bronwen agrees: "I'm a strong believer in the simple things in life."

When out walking with tangata whaiora, she encourages them to look up and around to notice their surroundings and appreciate the beauty of the world.

People who are nervous about attending can also bring a support person with them. "I think just getting over that hurdle of trying something new, it's good to include a family member or friend," Bronwen says.

Also, having another point of view can be helpful to people and adds to understanding from both sides.

This fits under the whanau ora model of inclusiveness, Kevin says. "It makes sense because it's all part of the healing process."

The new Tui Ora peer support group runs from 11.15am to 12.45pm in the St James Church Hall, Lawry St, New Plymouth on the first and third Friday of each month. Gold coin appreciated.

Making The Most of Thinking Differently

Some of the greatest minds of all time have had their own experience of mental illness.



Thankfully, neither their unwellness nor society have been able to hold back these brilliant people.

Every Saturday at 10am, you can tune in to 100.4FM to find out about those who have contributed to the world because they think differently.

So far, we have featured Abraham Lincoln, Spike Milligan, Vincent van Gogh, Jim Carrey, Sinead O'Connor and JK Rowling (pictured).

In 2008, the creator of Harry Potter came out about her struggle with depression and suicidal thoughts, when she was struggling to cope as a 20-something single mother.

She spent nine months undertaking cognitive behavioural therapy to get well. Imagine our world without Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley and his family, Albus Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall and Hagrid?

"I have never been remotely ashamed of having been depressed. Never. What's to be ashamed of? I went through a really rough time and I am quite proud that I got out of that,"

Rowling said in an interview.



Coming Soon on Access Radio...



"Mental Health Matters"

August

Every Thursday 9.30am.
This month Cecily Bull interviews
Fi Spetnar-Perez



9.30am
every Thursday of each month

Thought for the Issue:

"We do not need magic to change the world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already. We have the power to imagine better."

- JK Rowling

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—August 5 & 19

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(Aug1,15,29) 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



Mindful grief

The fight or flight reaction has served humanity well during our evolution. It is possible that without it, we would not be here today.

Once, fight or flight made perfect sense because it could save us from becoming a predator's meal.

Times have changed; we have changed. Now there are more subtle situations in which this instinct does not always serve us well.

Take grief for example. When we are experiencing grief, it is tempting for us to try to fight or run away from it. Another thing we may do is try to distract ourselves from this feeling.

This could be by losing ourselves in our work, using substances such as drugs and alcohol to help numb ourselves to the pain, or any number of other methods.

Losing a person, a thing or an opportunity that you valued is an unpleasant experience. However, it is important that we make time to let ourselves feel the emotions and sensations associated with that loss.

Grief is a natural, healthy response to events that happen in our lives. The stronger our bond with whatever or whoever we have lost, the stronger our feeling of loss will be.

Sometimes it may feel as if there is a void in your life left by the loss of a beloved person or possession. It is important to realise that it is normal to feel this way, and not be in too much of a rush to fill this emptiness.

Grieving gives us an opportunity to say goodbye to what we have lost, and allows our minds to adjust to the reality of life without it. There is no



“normal” way in which to grieve; your reaction to loss is as individual as your fingerprint.

Grief may come in waves, and it is difficult to predict what stimuli will trigger this response in us. Perhaps it's a favourite piece of music, or a day such as a birthday or anniversary that reminds us of our loss. The feeling could just come on its own.

Trying to suppress or postpone this response does not mean that it will go away - we may in fact prolong the process by trying to stifle it. This is not to say that we should seek to wallow in the feeling; we just need to be able to face it on its own terms.

Mindfulness is a tool that can help us increase our physical and mental awareness of what we are experiencing at any given moment, and can be a powerful ally when dealing with grief.

Rather than retreating from the feelings and sensations it can elicit

in us, there is healing value in paying full attention to everything we experience. Mindfulness teaches us that there is no “good” or “bad” experience - these are simply values that we place on what we see and feel.

Fresh insight can be gained when we put aside everything we may believe we have learned about something in the past, and try to imagine we are encountering it for the first time.

The next time you perceive that sinking sensation in the core of your body, or the feeling of a tear sliding down your cheek when you think of what you have lost - pay attention to it. Focus on what it feels like to breathe, or to cry, and try to live inside the moment as if it was a new experience to you.

Rather than being swept up in a confusion of different thoughts and sensations, try to find one thing that is constant to devote your concentration to. Hold onto it, acknowledge it, and let it go when you are ready.

Mindfulness isn't about avoiding difficult and unpleasant feelings, but about finding a sense of “grounding” and acceptance. When we are able to break down a situation into its elements and see it for what it is rather than what it appears to be as a whole, it becomes easier to accept.

Grief seems like a complex phenomenon, but it is often made up of many feelings and responses we may understand and come to terms with if we can analyse them on their own merits.

Accepting our grief mindfully can take us on a greater inner journey than running away from it ever could.

Tony Spencer

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Taranaki Kowhaiwhai panel - The Hammerhead shark, Mangopare - 'keep positive, see it through'