



“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 43 OCTOBER 2013

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

Connecting with rural community
Rural newspaper “Feeling Down on the Farm – Mental health in rural Taranaki” is to be launched during Mental Health Awareness Week.
 The publication was inspired by the successful 2010 “Down on the Farm—Depression and Mental Health in the Rural South” publication, which was the brainchild of Yvonne O’Hara, Southern Rural Life reporter and NZ Mental Health Media Grant recipient. Urenui farmers John and Linda White were so impressed with the rural south publication they initiated the writing of this Taranaki version featuring our farmers, their stories and where and how to get help locally. Representatives from the Taranaki Rural Support Trust, Like Minds Taranaki, Federated Farmers, Rural NZ Women and Dairy NZ joined John and Linda White to produce 12 000 copies of this publication.
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Mental Health Awareness October 2013

It’s time to Connect.
 That’s the theme of this year’s Mental Health Awareness Week, which starts in Taranaki from October 13. We hold our programme a week after the national one, so that it doesn’t fall in the school holidays, and consider the whole of October as a time to raise awareness.
 This year’s events are a mixed bag of fresh ideas, creative connections and the tried and true. It all kicks off with Turn The Living Page, a free human library event being held at Puke Ariki on Sunday, October 13. For this event, “readers” get to take out a “book”, which is a person with experience of mental illness for a 30-minute conversation. This event was inspired by the Human Library at this year’s Womad. (more on page 2). The Like Minds Taranaki Real Arts group has an exhibition at the Real Tart Gallery from Tuesday, October



15. That’s also the day for a shin-dig in Hawera. Tangata Whaiora are invited to the Hawera Community Centre for this free social outing, which includes singing, karaoke and a BBQ lunch. At Puke Ariki on Wednesday, October 16, the Yahoo Connection offers a range of inspiring speakers. All four will talk about the healing powers of connection through creativity, nature, respite care and working with drug users.
 The invitation-only launch of the *Feeling Down on the Farm* newspaper happens on Thursday, October 17, and this publication will make a massive impact on the mental health of Taranaki’s rural community. There will be displays embracing the Connect theme throughout libraries in Taranaki and a lunch-time mental health quiz for WITT students in their campus cafeteria on October 23.
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Coming Events: OCTOBER 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 2 & 16:	Post Natal Support Group at NP Women’s Centre, 10am-12 noon
Thur 10 & 24	Peer Support Group at Stratford Community House, 10am
Wed 9 & 23:	Wellness Group at Like Minds, 10.30am-12noon
Mon 7 & 21:	Peer Support Gp, 164 Princes St, Hawera, 10am
Thur 17:	Writers’ Group at Like Minds, 2pm, (Subject:
Thur 31:	Mates Men’s Meeting, 15 Dawson St, NP, 2-4pm

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Publication connecting with Taranaki's rural community

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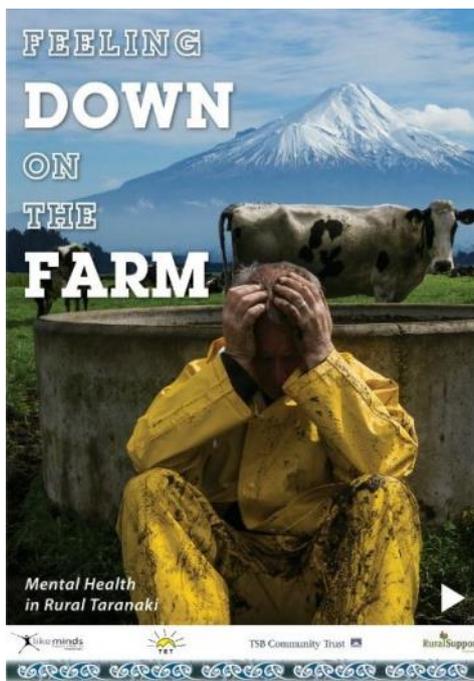
This publication will be distributed to all Taranaki rural post box holders, libraries, GPs and it is also available online at:

www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz

This feature outlines many of the causes, symptoms and concerns of stress, anxiety and depression among farmers, their staff and organisations associated with Taranaki's rural sector.

Its key objectives are to:

- *Raise mental health awareness among farmers, their family/whanau, their friends and neighbours and the wider rural community;*
- *Convey the importance of seeking professional help—the sooner the better;*
- *Reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness which so often prevents people from seeking professional treatment and support;*
- *Decrease the high incidence of suicide in our rural community; and*
- *Provide information on what and where services are available and how to access them.*



In New Zealand, there is almost twice the number of suicides as road deaths. In Taranaki, the person most at risk of completing suicide is a middle aged farmer with experience of mental illness. This situation has to change. This publication is produced by farmers for farmers. The key message is seeking professional

help for mental distress is a strength not a weakness. Much of the reluctance to seek help may be due to the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

Some people, particularly men, feel that the perceived shame they may feel by seeking treatment for their mental distress is worse than the symptoms of their distress.

It is hoped that the personal stories and information in this newspaper will encourage people to seek help for their distress, sooner rather than later.

Doing so will increase their chance of recovery and make things easier for the people who care most about them.

Like Minds Taranaki pays particular attention to ensuring that the rural sector is an important part of the everyday work we do.

Consequently, we are pleased to be part of this initiative.

As Rural Coordinator at Like Minds Taranaki, I am proud to have been involved in "Feeling Down on the Farm" production as editor and coordinator.

By Gordon Hudson

Sharing awareness

From Page 1

Also in October, Jim Dickinson and Gabby Ward will be visiting high schools to do presentations about acceptance of people who have experience of mental unwellness, and provide information about mental illness and addiction, plus show them what's available online to help youth.

Like Minds Taranaki is also running a Connect October campaign on Facebook, inspiring people to try something every day to connect with others, nature and even themselves.

Appropriately, all these events have come about because those in Taranaki's mental health network have come together to Connect – people to people – tuhono tangata ki te tangata.

Turn the Living Page – human library

The power of people's stories is the inspiration for the starting event for Mental Health Awareness Week in Taranaki.

Turn The Living Page is being held in the library at Puke Ariki on Sunday, October 13 from 1pm to 4pm.

This human library is an extension of the Turn The Page project, which involves doctors prescribing self-help books to people with mild to moderate mental illness.

In this case, there are seven "books" – people with lived experience of mental illness – putting themselves forward to be "read" by a borrower. Turn The Living Page is based on the human library concept held at Womad in New Plymouth in March this year; an event whose organiser Diane Bellamy says broke down barriers and changed lives for the

better – forever. Diane took a "book" out during a human library event in the UK and was so moved by the experience she suggested it be part of Womad.

"It excites me – it's a way of breaking down barriers in the community, promoting understanding," Diane says.

"It's a powerful medium for people to connect with one another about subjects and issues that we either know nothing about and want to know more about."

The "books" for Turn The Living Page are: Paul Townsend, Sarah Darke, Rawinia Capper-Young, Gabby Ward, Daniel Morgan, Nic Magrath and David Prentice.

To book a "book", please call 7596060. For more information go to www.pukeariki.com or www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Connect – *tuhono tangata ki te tangata*

October 2013 – Programme includes

TURN the LIVING PAGE – FREE

Sunday 13th October – 1:00 – 4:00 pm – Puke Ariki Library (1st floor)

Learn about an aspect of living with and recovering from mental illness by having a 30 minute conversation with a human book.

Rawinia Capper-Young, Sarah Darke, Nic Magrath,

Daniel Morgan, David Prentice, Paul Townsend, Gabby Ward

See Puke Ariki What's On brochure - book through Puke Ariki 06-759 6060

DANCE / SOCIAL / KARAOKE / BBQ – HAWERA – FREE

Tuesday 15th October – 10.30-1pm

Limited numbers – contact Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966

ART EXHIBITION BY 'REAL ARTS' AT REAL TART GALLERY

Celebrate the work of the Real Arts Group – exhibition from Tuesday 15th October – FREE

THE YAHOO CONNECTION

Wednesday 16th October – 6:00 – 7:30 pm – Puke Ariki Foyer

Connect with ideas, actions and people who make things happen inside & out.

Wayne Morris – Connecting through Creativity

Virginia Winder – The Flower Effect

Garth Browning – Connecting with Drug Addicts

Ross Ekdahl – Crisis Respite

See Puke Ariki What's On brochure or contact Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966

LAUNCH OF "FEELING DOWN ON THE FARM"

a 16-page A3 newspaper about mental health in Rural Taranaki

Tuesday 22nd October – by invitation only

For copies and information contact Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966

QUIZ – for WITT Students – at WITT Cafeteria – FREE

Wednesday 23rd October 12 noon – WITT student teams only

PRESENTATIONS TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

as a follow-on to the Mike King events

Gabby Ward and Jim Dickinson – raising awareness of mental health in young people

Late October

For more information contact Like Minds Taranaki 06-759-0966

DISPLAYS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

See all Puke Ariki & District Libraries for information on mental health

CONNECT OCTOBER – LIKE MINDS Taranaki FACEBOOK PAGE

Follow the **Connect October Challenge** on the Like Minds Taranaki Facebook page for ideas on how to CONNECT during October

Taranaki Mental Health Awareness Week

is supported by a wide range of organisations

providing effective services for people experiencing mental illness.

Healthcare NZ Like Minds Taranaki Pathways Progress to Health

Puke Ariki & Community Libraries Real Tart Community Art Gallery

South Taranaki District Council Supporting Families in Mental Illness

Taranaki District Health Board – Mental Health & Addiction Services WITT

Tui Ora Ltd Problem Gambling Foundation NZ Needle Exchange Taranaki (NETS)

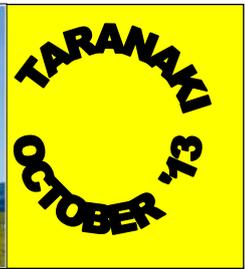
Proudly supporting mental health awareness

Mental illness can affect anyone, anytime, anywhere.

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

mental.health@xtra.co.nz

www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz



Supported by the TSB Community Trust

WHAT'S ON NGĀ KAUPAPA O TE WĀ

Issue 74—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 2013

Every Tue	Active in Age Programme —TSB Stadium—10am-12pm—Tai Chi session 11-12pm. \$3
Every Tue	Migrant Women Meet - Puke Ariki - 11am-12:30pm, Community Lounge on Level 1. FREE
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
Tue Oct 1	International Day of the Older Person —NPDC Council Chamber 10am-12pm. Fun and engaging stories and lessons will be shared together with a celebratory free morning tea and nibbles. A free bus will be provided from the TSB Stadium, leaving at 9:45am. FREE
Tue Oct 1	Tenancy/Renting and the Law —65 Devon St. West—10:30-11:30. What your rights are when renting. What to do if things are going wrong in the landlord/tenant relationship. Part of the Bite Size Law spring series. FREE
Wed Oct 2	School Holiday Programme: Call of Oakura — OAKURA Library—10-11. Join the library to create your own artwork on stones and driftwood inspired by Maori motifs. Bookings essential—phone 06 759 6060. FREE
Thu Oct 3	Mental Health Matters - Access Radio 104.4FM —9:30-10am. Cecily Bull & Diane Bellamy discussing Turn the Living Page - connecting by learning more about others. FREE
Thu Oct 3	E-book Troubleshooting - Puke Ariki - 9:30-10:30am - EVERY THURSDAY . Come along and learn how to download free e-books. The wonderful staff at the library will do their best to solve any of your technological mysteries no matter what your device. FREE
Thu Oct 3	School Holiday Programme: Wild Weather Wotsits — INGLEWOOD Library. 10:30-11:30am. Come and create a cool wind chime and rainstick to celebrate spring. Bookings essential on 06 759 6060. FREE
Thu Oct 3	Sharpen Your Style —Centre City Shopping Centre—5:30-7:30pm. Dress for Success NP is running this event on the bridge and you can get involved. Enter one of the teams to dress the 'models' in a dress off or you could represent a business in the Dress Factor competition, where you must come as a pair in what not to wear and what to wear to an interview. Everyone is invited, so come along! FREE
Fri Oct 4	Hui-A-Toi: Mini Coiled Baskets - Puke Ariki - 10am - 12pm. Get crafty with like-minded people and learn new skills. These regular sessions take place on the first Friday of every month. All are welcome, whatever your experience level, all materials are supplied. FREE
Sun Oct 6	Call of Taranaki—Building a Career As An Artist —Puke Ariki Foyer—1-2pm. Come along to this panel discussion and hear from artists who have established careers in New Zealand, who talk about what they believe it takes to be successful in the art world. FREE
Tue Oct 8	On Your Bike Te Henui Ride —East End Skating Ring, East End Reserve—10:15-12:45. To celebrate the International Day of the Older Person and encourage an active, fit and healthy lifestyle in our golden years. FREE
Taranaki Mental Health Awareness Week 13—18 October ** Public Holiday - Labour Day - Monday 28 ** ** School holidays—last day of term September 27 and school resumes October 14 **	

"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.



- Sun Oct 6** **Explorer Mystery Trail**—Pukeiti—10:30am—2pm. Follow a mystery trail through Pukeiti with your kids and enjoy its explosion of spring colour. **FREE**
- Mon Oct 7** **The Exhibition Express**—**STRATFORD** Railway Station, Broadway SH3—10am-4pm. A powerful KiwiRail engine is pulling new scenic carriages and four themed containers, each packed with fascinating displays about rail in New Zealand. There will be family fun, prizes and giveaways. **FREE**
- Tue Oct 8** **Buying on Credit**—TCL 65 Devon St. West—10:30-11:30. What you need to know before you buy on credit and what to do when things go wrong. **FREE**
- Tue Oct 8** **School Holiday Programme: Puppet Fun**—**BELL BLOCK** Library—Come along and have fun making your very own puppet. Bookings essential on 06 759 6060. **FREE**
- Thu Oct 10** **School Holiday Programme: Holiday Activity Table**—Puke Ariki—1-4pm. No booking necessary— come out and try the craft activity anytime between 1 and 4pm. **FREE**
- Thu Oct 10** **School Holiday Programme: Spring Has Sprung**—**INGLEWOOD** Library—10:30-11:30am. Come and create weird and wonderful spring creations. Bookings essential: 06 759 6060. **FREE**
- Fri Oct 11** **School Holiday Programme: Taranaki Creative Collage**—**WAITARA** Library—2-3:30pm. What do you think Taranaki looks like? Make a card, poster or postcard. Bookings essential on 06 759 6060. **FREE**
- Sun Oct 13**—**Call of Taranaki: Heritage Collection Insight: Raranga**—Puke Ariki—10-11:30am. Join weavers and artists as they explore the woven treasures from the Puke Ariki Heritage Collection. They will use selected taonga to share knowledge, customs, practice and inspiration around raranga/weaving. **FREE**
- Sun Oct 13** **Turn the Living Page**—1st Floor Puke Ariki Library—1-4pm. Learn about an aspect of living with and recovering from mental illness by having a 30 minute conversation with a human book. This event is presented in association with the ongoing Turn The Page programme which makes self help books available through the library for people with mild to moderate mental illness. **FREE**
- Tue Oct 15** **Art Exhibition By 'Real Arts'** - Real TArt Community Gallery—10-5. Celebrate the work of the Real Arts Group. The exhibition will run until Friday Nov 8. **FREE**
- Wed Oct 16** **The Yahoo Connection**—Puke Ariki Foyer—6-7:30pm. Connect with ideas, actions and people about different ways to find happiness. **FREE**
- Mon Oct 28** **Food Bank Open Day**—36 Vivian St. 1-3:30pm. The first time in its history that Food Bank has opened its doors to the general public. Come and view the facilities and ask questions. **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 October 7 & 21. **GOLD COIN**

Peer Support Group—Community House, 52 Juliet St, **STRATFORD**—Every second Thursday,(Oct 10 & 24) 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*



Suicide in elderly an increasing concern...

“Men aged 85 and over are completing suicide at a higher rate than any other age group,” Chief coroner Judge Neil MacLean recently stated on releasing last year’s suicide statistics.

This is an appalling situation and it is likely to be a great deal worse than the figures suggest. Many people working in services for the elderly are concerned that these figures do not take into consideration the growing number of older people choosing the slow death of starvation and/or electing not to take their medication. Choosing not to eat or take medication is one of the few things some elderly have control over.

The Chief coroner feels too that the line between euthanasia and suicide was a grey area and there needed to be more research into why and where older people were completing suicide.

More recently he announced that his Office will investigate

the suicide rate among the elderly. Thank goodness for our Chief Coroner – a man who has the courage to break the unofficial outdated code of silence that has surrounded the disturbingly high suicide rates in New Zealand.

The question that begs to be answered is why it has taken so long for this to happen. Maintaining the silence of suicide numbers has left the public, the politicians and the social service organisations in the dark. It has resulted in suicides in New Zealand being under-recognised,

under-funded and those responsible for this situation unchallenged.

The bigger question that needs to be answered is what are we going to do about elderly suicides? We need to know why suicides are so high. What role does social isolation, loneliness, elder abuse, lack of quality community care and other factors contribute to so many elderly taking their own lives – in the most tragic of ways.

Sadly, there appears little enthusiasm in Taranaki, or indeed anywhere, to have a discussion about elder suicide. Unfortunately, the reality is that we all find it difficult to talk about end of life questions and the current reluctance to address the causes of elder suicide is a reflection of this.

When the public is unable to stomach the uncomfortable truth about something, it is easy for reporting agencies to ignore or deliberately under

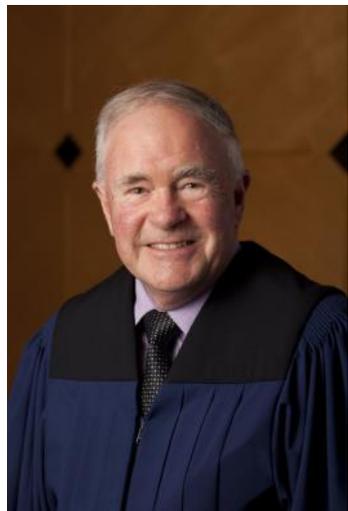
report the facts. How will we know the extent of the problem without accurate data?

In Taranaki last year there were 15 suicides – 2 of these were males over the age of 85 years.

Will those responsible for promoting positive ageing experiences have the courage to address this situation in an open, and respectful way?

For the sake of the increasing numbers of vulnerable elderly, I hope so.

Gordon Hudson
Coordinator – Elderly and Rural



Harmony House Te Whare Marire
83 Poplar Grove Ph: 7575589

To each and every one who donated goods, gifts and vouchers for our sausage sizzle, so we could purchase art supplies for our art group, we wish to say sincere and heartfelt thanks.

Every Thursday at 1pm till 3pm Harmony House holds a peer support group for art and for sharing. This group is growing in size each week with people coming along from as far as Waitara to enjoy the friendship and peer support and especially the art activities which can now continue thanks to the generosity of all those who kindly gave to us.

We would especially like to thank the following businesses: The Warehouse (NP), Countdown (Courtney St), New World (Courtney St), Bunnings(Corbett Rd), Pak ‘n Save (NP) Hardy’s Health Shop (Centre City), Kiwi Butcher and City Care Pharmacy (Egmont St).

Also a big heartfelt thanks to those who responded to the article in the newspaper with offers of support, china for mosaics and volunteer work. We now have a wonderful supply of art materials due to the kindness of these businesses and individuals and we have just been given a \$1000 grant through the North Taranaki Community Arts Council.

We are planning an art exhibition for February March 2014 and will post news re this at a later date with invitations from anyone within the community and the mental health sector to participate should they wish to do so. Just contact us on 7575589. We are also planning an open day, although any day is open for anyone in the community to visit, this will be to have the house blessed and celebrate the 14 months that we have been operating. Information regarding this will be posted nearer the Open Day.

Thank you from Karen

Taranaki DHB Elections Looming...



So many new faces—so much choice! Please encourage everyone interested in health, particularly mental health to think carefully about their selection. Ideally this will be an opportunity to increase the range of experience and understanding of the wider health issues for all of Taranaki.



Name change ...

A service with a direct link to Taranaki's biggest kaupapa Māori health and social services organisation was re-launched on Sept. 2. Tui Ora Family Health is the new name of the practice formerly known as Te Aroha Medcare. It offers low cost services with fees capped for adults and children. Anyone can enroll with the practice.



New Family Eating Disorder group...

This is a group providing support and information for families who have a loved one with an eating disorder.

Family members have the opportunity to meet with others and share similar experiences and discuss strategies for strengthening coping skills.

Meetings are held every 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month – from 5.30-7.00pm at the TDHB Child & Adolescent mental Health Services.

For more information –
call 06-753-6139 ext:7949
or 027-241-0134

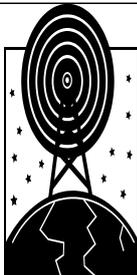
Coming Soon on Access Radio...



"Mental Health Matters"

OCTOBER

Every Thursday 9.30am. This month Cecily Bull & Diane Bellamy discuss 'Turn The Living Page' project—connecting by learning about others



**9.30am
every Thursday of each month**

Thought for the Issue:

"Sometimes, reaching out and taking someone's hand is the beginning of a journey.

At other times, it is allowing another to take yours."

Vera Nazarian

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—Oct 7 & 21

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 2nd Thursday (Oct 10 & 24) 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.
06-759-0966

Thinking Differently

Imagine the world without these people: **Stephen Fry, J.K. Rowling, Sir John Kirwan, Vincent van Gogh, Sinead O'Connor.**

Tune into 100.4
The Most FM every
Saturday at 10am for
an upbeat dose of

Thinking Differently

about those who people who have contributed to our world by

Thinking Differently!



LifeLine
Taranaki
0800 543 354
www.lifeline.co.nz

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
10.30am—12 noon

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

Creative Writing Group:

3rd Thursday each month
2—3pm

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

Real Arts Group:

Every Wednesday
1—4pm

Real TArt Community Gallery
19 Egmont Street, NP

New Support Group...

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

10am-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



Staying Connected

One of the most important tools to stay mentally healthy can't be found in any bottle of pills you can get from the chemist. Neither can you get it from a healthy diet.

You can't eat, drink or breathe it, yet in many ways it is as important to our survival as food, water or air. That thing is communication and a sense of connection.

Humans are social animals; we are born with a hard-wired need for attention and interaction. Our need for these things is so great in fact, that infants who don't receive enough have a chance of dying.

The impact of a lack of human connection can be felt throughout our entire lives, according to an American study. It found that people with strong social and community ties were two to three times less likely to die over a nine year period.

It is disheartening then, that it is often during the times when we are most likely to need this support - when we are experiencing mental illness - that it is most difficult to come by.

Life during periods of mental illness can feel lonely, regardless of whether you're the one experiencing it firsthand or living with someone who is.

While the sense of stigma and discrimination surrounding mental illness is decreasing,

there's still a sense of awkwardness surrounding the subject.

If you break your leg or get the flu, it doesn't fundamentally change who you are or the way people think of you. If you're diagnosed with a mental illness however, people tend to see you in a completely different light.

Broken legs heal. The flu abates. Severe mental illness is also often a passing thing thanks to modern medicine and treatment, but the mark it leaves upon your life seems to be all too enduring.

Because they're unsure what to do or say around you, friends and acquaintances may stop visiting when you or someone you live with has become unwell.

It's important to remember during these times that having a mental illness doesn't define who a person is - it's just a small facet of their own life experience.

You don't have to be a health professional to be a friend to someone who has experienced mental illness, or need to treat them any differently. In fact, just by being there you are providing something more therapeutic than you may at first be able to appreciate.

Self stigma can be one of the most damaging effects of mental illness; in many cases it can in fact have a more negative impact

than the condition itself. It can do much to change the way a person thinks about themselves and expects to be treated by others because of their experience.

You can help reduce this impact by providing the same friendship you would during any other difficult time.

Staying connected is the theme of this year's mental health awareness week. It's a time to remember that a sense of connection is important for *everyone's* mental health—whether or not they've experienced mental illness.



It's never been easier to get in touch with your friends and family; they're just a touch of a button or a mouse click away thanks to mobile phones and the internet.

A small gesture like leaving a comment or sending a text may not seem like a lot, but it can mean a great deal to whoever receives it.

If you've got the time, perhaps you could phone your friend and have a chat with them. Or even better, arrange for a time to visit them in person.

While they may not always feel like spending time with you, you'll still brighten your friend's day and give them a sense of inclusion by asking.

Tony Spencer

"Korero Mai" is edited by Gordon Hudson, "What's On" by Stephanie Mapley and "Whakaaro Pai" by Tony Spencer—all from Like Minds Taranaki. Your news and views are eagerly sought. Like Minds Taranaki, PO Box 5015, New Plymouth, 3rd Floor, Brougham House, 50 Devon Street West, NP, ph 06-759-0966 mental.health@xtra.co.nz. www.likemindstaranaki.org.nz
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