

**The Like Minds, Like Mine programme is working with communities to promote the inclusion of people with experience of mental illness and reduce stigma and discrimination.**

## **1. What is the Like Minds, Like Mine programme?**

The programme has made a name for itself through advertisements fronted both by famous and previously unknown New Zealanders who have experienced mental illness, including the award-winning *'Know me before you judge me'* campaign. The advertising is now in its fourth phase, with the call to action shifting to *"What you do makes the difference"*.

Like Minds is a great deal more than television advertisements. The programme includes community activities and events, training, a telephone helpline, a website, newsletters, resources, conferences and hui, research, news media engagement, monitoring and responding to media coverage and policy development.

Together, all this work helps to break down stereotypes, challenge stigma (negative labelling) and discrimination (intolerant and prejudicial actions) towards people who have experienced mental illness, and educate about human rights aspects of discrimination.

## **2. Why was the Like Minds, Like Mine programme begun?**

Mental illness can affect anyone at any time – regardless of age, culture, income or gender. 47% of New Zealanders will experience mental illness in their lifetime<sup>1</sup> and many more will experience periods of stress or life events such as grief or loss that affect our mental health.

Most people who experience mental illness will recover. Despite this, people who have experienced mental illness are often stigmatised and discriminated against, excluded from society and devalued as citizens.

**Like Minds began in 1997** after the Mason Report<sup>2</sup> into mental health services found that stigma and discrimination hampered recovery; the report also identified the need for a public awareness campaign.

As a result, the Government allocated specific funding for the Like Minds programme, to ensure that funding wasn't diverted from services.

The Mason Report also recommended that people with experience of mental illness actively participate in planning and delivering the programme – they know intimately the consequences of stigma and discrimination.

A first step in developing Like Minds was, therefore, a national seminar involving people with experience of mental illness.

## **3. Who is behind the Like Minds, Like Mine Programme?**

Funded and led by the Ministry of Health, Like Minds is essentially developed and run by people with experience of mental illness.

It is implemented in communities across New Zealand by 26 regional Like Minds providers, including consumer managed organisations, a variety of non-government organisations, Maori and Pacific organisations, public health agencies and mental health organisations. They are the face of Like Minds – running a range of anti-discrimination activities with their communities, community organisations, marae, businesses and local news media.

The programme also has a national telephone helpline provider, Lifeline, running the 0800 number, Phoenix Research doing ongoing research and evaluation and DraftFCB producing the mass media advertising.

The Mental Health Foundation, Senate Communications and Case Consulting provide overall PR and communications as well as infrastructural and planning support for other national activities including the website, newsletters and resources, conferences and hui, and policy development. The programme also has ongoing input from a Māori Caucus and Pacific Advisory Group.

#### **4. What does Like Minds, Like Mine do?**

Like Minds uses a wide range of national and 'grassroots' strategies to challenge discrimination and create a nation that values and includes people with experience of mental illness.

These strategies include the nationwide television and radio campaign, policy work, research, public speaking engagements, community events such as art exhibitions, marches, hui and fono, training for educators, media monitoring and responses (including media releases) and articles in the news media. It also provides information and training to media organisations and to writers and journalism students to support accurate media representation.

The programme recognises that people have vastly different experiences of mental illness and recovery, and that all strata of society are affected; the advertising can't directly address every type of mental illness or every issue, but is powerfully backed by more targeted community interactions. Local communities plan and deliver activities that suit their own needs.

As the programme has evolved, the focus has moved from raising awareness and changing people's attitudes, to bringing about changes in behaviours, practices and policies, so that people with experience of mental illness are valued and included. It emphasises that what we all do makes the difference.

The Like Minds community approach has been fundamental to its success, ensuring community 'ownership' of the campaign – regional work is driven by community needs and locally available skills, knowledge and opportunities.

#### **5. What has Like Minds, Like Mine achieved?**

New Zealand is widely seen as leading the world in antidiscrimination work and has a strong service user movement.

Research<sup>3</sup> shows that the Like Minds programme has brought about significant change – especially in people's perceptions of mental illness, and since Like Minds began:

- Awareness of mental illness has increased.
- New Zealanders are more likely to accept someone with experience of mental illness as a workmate.
- New Zealanders are more likely to think that someone with experience of mental illness is able to contribute to society.
- New Zealanders say they would be less likely to be ashamed of having a mental illness.
- People with experience of mental illness have become more visible in a positive way – quashing negativestereotypes and raising awareness through leading and role-modelling recovery and interaction with thecommunity.

#### **6. What now ?**

While New Zealand has come a long way in positively acknowledging mental illness in the community, unfortunately discrimination still occurs.

People with experience of mental illness still experience discrimination in many areas of their lives, including in mental health services and by friends and families. For many, discrimination prevents them from having full access to education, employment and housing, contributes to lower incomes, and reduces their ability to participate in society.

There is still a lot to do, therefore, if changes in attitude are to be backed up by changes to behaviour, policies and practices – and if New Zealand is to meet its international human rights commitments.

Like Minds has a National Plan that sets the outcomes, actions and approaches for Like Minds until 2013. This includes increasing the opportunities for leadership by people with experience of mental illness, addressing organisational stigma and discrimination, working with the news media, specific approaches for population groups including Māori and Pacific peoples, working with youth, addressing internalised stigma, and building partnerships.

## 7. What can I do to help?

What we all do makes the difference.

First and foremost – value and include those around you who are experiencing or have experienced mental illness. Ask them what you can do.

Learn about how stigma and discrimination devalue individuals as well as communities.

Encourage others in your community to be supportive and inclusive. That means treating everyone respectfully, with the same rights and responsibilities, and challenging stigma and discrimination when it occurs.

Become an advocate – write letters to the editor, contact reporters to congratulate positive stories, complain to businesses and/or the news media when you see or experience stigma or discrimination.

For more information about the programme, your local Like Minds provider or countering stigma and discrimination, visit [www.likeminds.org.nz](http://www.likeminds.org.nz). The website includes a range of resources including factsheets, newsletters, publications and research.

To get help for yourself or someone you are concerned about, phone the Like Minds national support and resource line, **0800 102 107** or talk to your general practitioner.

For more information about mental health and mental illness:

- Mental Health Foundation Resource & Information Service.

Phone: **09 300 7010**

Email: [resource@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:resource@mentalhealth.org.nz)

Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

- The Mental Health Commission.

Phone: **04 474 8900**

Email: [info@mhc.govt.nz](mailto:info@mhc.govt.nz)

Website: [www.mhc.govt.nz](http://www.mhc.govt.nz)

- Visit [www.likeminds.org.nz](http://www.likeminds.org.nz)