Originally founded in 1979 as Schizophrenia Fellowship, we are Taranaki’s oldest community based mental health organisation.

A lot has happened in our 40 years—name, locations and expanded focus and we look forward to continuing to positively impact our community for 40 more years!

Thank you for joining us in our journey and we look forward to having you involved this year in our anniversary celebrations; consider supporting our 40 for 40 Anniversary Campaign; and connect with us on Facebook—our Mindfulness Monday posts are quickly becoming a must-read to start your week out right!

Inside this edition:
- Spotlight on Central and South Taranaki
- Setting the Course—new programme!
- Whānau Voices—from a 13 and 15 year old
- Mental Health Inquiry Selections and Update
- New Referral Process
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- Wish List & 40 for 40 Anniversary Campaign
Spotlight on Central & South Taranaki

We often hear that there are limited services and resources in Central and South Taranaki. While population density plays a large part, we want to do our part to make sure that our services and support isn’t limited to just the New Plymouth area where our office is located. We’re a small team, but we’re dedicated to making sure that we spend the necessary amount of time to meet the needs of family and whānau across Taranaki.

Here’s some information about us and our recent work across Taranaki:

Our team spends an average of 3 full time days in South Taranaki and most of this time is one-on-one client work.

This year, we are excited to once again offer a Family Support Group in Hawera on the second Wednesday of each month. Holly runs this group and our February group was very positively received.

Nika has been connecting with Rahotu school on the coast to plan a workshop to help children and young people understand anxiety and how it can impact them physiologically.

Gareth is considering running the next 6 week mindfulness group in Central or South.

Our team is presenting to school cluster groups to inform school principals about our work and how we might be able to support the students in their community.
Setting the Course

Navigating Emotional Dysregulation

This year SF Taranaki will be facilitating a new workshop throughout the region!

‘Setting the Course (Navigating Emotional Dysregulation)’ is a six week workshop for family members of people who experience emotional dysregulation.

Emotional dysregulation refers to an emotional response that is poorly modulated, and does not fall within the typical range of emotive response to stimuli. Possible indications of emotional dysregulation include angry outbursts or behaviour outbursts such as destroying or throwing objects, aggression towards self or others, and threats of suicide. These variations usually occur in seconds to minutes or hours. Emotional dysregulation can lead to behavioural problems and can interfere with a person’s social interactions and relationships at home, in school, or work.

Emotional dysregulation may be present in people with disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder (BPD), and complex post-traumatic stress disorder.

Setting the Course is a free workshop, and aims to provide family members with information about emotional dysregulation, explore coping skills and communications strategies, and connect families with people “who get it”.

The first workshop will be happening in New Plymouth beginning March the 7th at 6.30pm.

The six sessions will then occur weekly on Thursday evenings from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. For those who would then like to continue with group support, a monthly Shared Experience Meeting is available (details of this group will be available during the workshop).

For more information please contact SF on 06 757 9300. It is important to register with the facilitators (Gareth & Holly), so that we can make sure the workshop is right for you.

“The information has put us in a better space, given us more options and has empowered us… the program was pivotal to success”.

- Past group member of Family Connections.

“...it has helped our family wrap around our family member. Everyone (now) knows what our daughter is dealing with”

- Past group member of Family Connections.
Whānau Voices

The Supporting Families team has been very helpful, supportive and made sure we always have someone to talk to. Nika has done her utmost to always be there for us, not only for emotional support but also to drive us places we couldn’t have gone otherwise, eg: to a doctor’s appointment, work or to the beach, so we could go for a walk or just hang out. If needed, Nika will sometimes help us talk to our parents about any issues we need help bringing up or feel uncomfortable talking about ourselves.

Through Supporting Families we have been able to learn many coping methods for difficult situations and how we should always take into account the other person’s point of view. Lately we have been learning about anger, whether it is in ourselves or others, how to cope with it and know what some underlying factors may be.

Nika has organised a group for young girls who, previously, she was seeing individually. We meet up once a fortnight and each time we learn something relevant to what we need support with, play games or go for walks. The group, which we named the WAVE GC (it’s an acronym for all the first letters of our names), has been really fun so far and we have each made some new friends. It is also comforting to know that we are not alone in what we are going through.

We are very thankful for all that Supporting Families and Nika have done to help us and are glad that the staff there are so welcoming.

- From a 13 and 15 year old rangatahi/young person

We invite you to share your story with us. We are always looking to highlight the ups and downs of life and your story could serve as an inspiration to others.

Please contact Justin at info@sftaranaki.org.nz to discuss writing or being interviewed for your story. They can be anonymous or named—whatever you feel like. Share and have a chance to help others.
The Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction was established in early 2018 in response to widespread concern about mental health and addiction services in the mental health sector and the broader community, and calls for a wide-ranging inquiry from service users, their families and whānau, people affected by suicide, people working in health, media, Iwi and advocacy groups.

Supporting Families Taranaki supported these efforts and in May 2018 offered both written reports and verbal feedback regarding ways to improve mental health and addiction services.

The report was released at the end of November. Here are selections from the Executive Summary.

Strong themes emerged from the people we met and submitters. People shared deeply personal experiences, motivated by a desire to tell their stories and bring about change. We heard a lot of heartache and sorrow, but also stories of hope and recovery.

This report records the main themes from the voices of the people: a call for wellbeing and community solutions – for help through the storms of life, to be seen as a whole person, not a diagnosis, and to be encouraged and supported to heal and restore one’s sense of self.

For Maori health and wellbeing, recognition of the impact of cultural alienation and generational deprivation, affirmation of indigeneity, and the importance of cultural as well as clinical approaches, emphasising ties to whānau, hapu and Iwi.

For Pacific peoples, the adoption of ‘Pacific ways’ to enable Pacific health and wellbeing – a holistic approach incorporating Pacific languages, identity, connectedness, spirituality, nutrition, physical activity and healthy relationships.

People said that unless New Zealand tackles the social and economic determinants of health, we will never stem the tide of mental health and addiction problems. There are clear links between poverty and poor mental health. People need safe and affordable houses, good education, jobs and income for mental wellbeing.

Addictions are recognised as a serious public health issue in New Zealand. Alcohol and other drugs are tearing families and communities apart. People and communities called for decisive action to limit the sale and promotion of alcohol, particularly around children and young people. As well as more treatment and rehabilitation services, people argued for a mature drug policy, with addiction treated as a health, not a criminal justice issue.

Families and whānau described patient privacy as a barrier used to exclude them from treatment and discharge planning, even though they are the ones there for the long haul. They asked for help for their family members, and more support for their own needs as carers. Families bereaved by suicide described a lack of support, and the delays and trauma of current suicide review processes.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

For all the relevant information including the full report and video summaries, head to: https://www.mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz
**Executive Summary selections from He Ara Oranga continued:**

**Children and young people** are exhibiting high levels of behavioural distress leading to deliberate self-harm, risk-taking, anxiety and other troubling behaviours. Parents are concerned about the harms of bullying and misuse of the internet and social media. School counsellors and teachers are overwhelmed by the number of students in distress. New Zealand’s high rates of youth suicide are a national shame. Students and teachers highlighted the importance of learning about mental health as part of the health curriculum and helping young children develop resilience and learn how to regulate their emotions.

People wanted **support in the community**, so they can stay connected and receive help for a variety of needs – crisis support and acute care, addiction recovery, long-term support, respite care, drop-in centres, social support, whanau wrap-around services and employment support.

They sought access to an expanded range of therapies, and resources to shift from district health boards (DHBs) to non-governmental organisation (NGO) providers, which are closer to the community.

Problems of access, **wait times and quality** were reported all over the country – having to fight and beg for services, not meeting the threshold for treatment, and the cruelty of being encouraged to seek help from unavailable or severely rationed services. Gaps in services, limited therapies, a system that is hard to navigate, variable quality and shabby facilities added up to a gloomy picture of a system failing to meet the needs of many people.

Members of the **workforce** told us of their love of their jobs, but reported stress, burnout and exhaustion from overwork and an increasing risk of assaults. One manager warned, “All the dreams of the Inquiry will come to naught if we don’t have a workforce”. There were loud and clear calls for more peer-support workers; more staff trained in Maori culture and Pacific cultures; and more training in mental health and addiction within primary health care and other sectors (education, corrections, police and social work).

We heard that New Zealand needs a **human rights and mental health approach** to be recognised in law to honour our international treaty obligations. People called for repeal and replacement of the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 (Mental Health Act) and an end to seclusion and restraint. Even in 2018, shame and stigma shape attitudes and act as barriers to seeking help. The Mental Health Act embeds archaic and risk averse attitudes that cause clinicians to opt too readily for coercion and control.

Submissions described a lack of clear **leadership and oversight at a national level**. People talked about what can be achieved when mental health and addiction is a priority area for government and there is clear leadership and direction from a mental health commission with a powerful statutory mandate. They asked for local leadership and innovation to be supported. We saw and heard about many examples of grass-roots leadership by people with lived experience.

We will provide more information in next newsletter instalment.
You’re in luck if you Prefer to Refer

Late last year we sent a survey to everyone/organisations that referred a client to us in 2018. We received a 50% response rate from the survey—nearly unheard of for surveys—and we learned a lot.

Here are some highlights of the survey:

- All of those surveyed thought that making a referral to us was easy or very easy
- Everyone surveyed was satisfied or very satisfied with us and our services
- All were likely or very likely to recommend us to a friend/colleague
- 80% of those surveyed have known our organisation longer than 3 years
- Almost 70% of those surveyed found out about our agency via ‘word of mouth’
- Over half thought that SF wasn’t as well known in the community as we could be
- Overall, everyone surveyed indicated that SF had a positive reputation in the community

What we’re doing in response to the survey:

- Survey respondents told us that having one referral form for all of our services would be more clear — so, we’ve done just that! We have created a new referral form that applies to anyone that would be referred to us.
- We have created a new email address for receiving all referrals: intake@sftaranaki.org.nz. This will help streamline our process, ensure more prompt follow-up and communication back to the referrer.
- Respondents overwhelmingly mentioned that we provide professional and quality support, education and advocacy, but we weren’t well known in the community. This year, we’re taking on several projects that will hopefully highlight our organisation. Any help that you would like to contribute to this would be most welcome!

We will be emailing out the new referral form to all referrers in early March, so stay tuned. We will still accept any old forms, but the information requested on the new form is clearer and supports the Supporting Parents, Healthy Children (SPHC) guidelines.

Instead of worrying about who to send the form to, you can send all referrals or referral queries to intake@sftaranaki.org.nz. We will send you a prompt reply letting you know that we have received the referral and will update you on progress if we are able.

Thank you to all who completed the survey and we’re pleased to use this information to better our service, processes and positive impact in the community.
Current SF groups on offer...

**Eating Disorder Family Support Group**

New Plymouth

Wednesdays-fortnightly, 6.30pm—8pm

SF Taranaki Office—128 Devon St. East

**Family Support Group**

Hawera

2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30pm—8pm

Contact Holly for location details

holly@sftaranaki.org.nz, 06 757 9300

**Family Support Group**

New Plymouth

1st Monday of the month, 6:30pm—8pm

216 Devon Street West—*not our office*

**Setting the Course:**

Navigating Emotional Dysregulation

March 7th and the next 5 Thurs., 6:30pm—8:30pm

*Requires Registration*

Contact Gareth for registration and more info.

gareth@sftaranaki.org.nz, 06 757 9300

**Kin Raising Kin**

Peer support for anybody raising a loved one’s child

Running fortnightly on Tuesdays, 9:30am- 11:00am

216 Devon Street West

Contact Diane 021 185 1097 or Fiona 027 263 3258 for more information

For more info on any of these groups please phone

SF Taranaki: 06 757 9300

And stay tuned for new community groups:

**Parent Support Group**

(for parents with children or young people with mental illness or addiction)

**Waves: Bereaved By Suicide Group**

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**Community Partner Highlight**

**Family Works**

A Presbyterian Support Initiative

Family Works provides a range of great programmes to support families in our community. They provide services to parents and families, for women, and for children and teens.

A majority of their services can be accessed through self-referral.

**Highlighted Family Works Services**

**Individual Support:**

Family Works Central is able to provide professional support and advice for individual parents and/or couples. This may include one-to-one support and education, counselling or social work services.

**Group Parenting Programmes:**

Family Works Central offers a variety of parent education groups that can support you to be a positive role model for the children in your life.

**Parenting Through Separation:**

This free information programme is designed to help parents and caregivers to work out what’s best for their children when separating.

Further information can be found on their website – www.familyworkscentral.org.nz

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For a space to breathe

call 06 2510993 or go to

www.taranakiretreat.org.nz
In November of last year, Marc Howard participated in the Tough Mudder challenge—a 19km run involving 18-20 unique obstacles to challenge teams and get them more than a bit dirty! Instead of doing the run just for fun, he decided to raise awareness for mental health.

From Marc:

“ My wife suffers from bipolar and we have been through some challenging years. The stigma around mental illness is still as strong as ever and groups like Supporting Families help educate and support people. SF was there for me and my family when we were trying to cope with understanding, finding resources and managing general day to day work loads while looking after 2 young boys and a very sick wife.

They are such a valuable part of the community that me completing the Tough Mudder is my way of saying ‘thank you’.”

Well, complete the Tough Mudder he did and through the Give-a-Little page that he set up, he was able to raise $1,350 to support SF!!

With the funding raised, we are able to send all three of our staff to a two day training on self-harm and how to support families when a loved one self-harms. We wouldn’t have been able to without this support.

Thank you to Marc and his team for their massive effort and support! Your contribution helps us continue our great work in the community!
Book Reviews

These holidays I made it my mission to read something about bipolar disorder and I found the following titles both at Puke Ariki Library in New Plymouth. Neither of these books are “easy” reads and I would hate to think that they might negatively trigger anyone. They are honest, heart-breaking, interesting and inspiring but please don’t read them if you are in a bad place in your own journey …

Resilience: Two sisters and a story of mental illness
By: Jessie Close with Pete Earley and Glenn Close

Most people have heard of the American actress Glenn Close, but few will have heard of her sister Jessie. Jessie, Glenn and their siblings were brought up in a dysfunctional family, spending many years in the Moral Re-Armament cult, living in New York, Switzerland, Connecticut, Zaire and Los Angeles. Their parents were often physically and emotionally unavailable to their children, and as a teenager Jessie began to seriously go off the rails. What followed was a life of drink, drugs, 5 marriages and many other doomed relationships. What Jessie didn’t know, was that she also had bipolar disorder. Sadly, she was not diagnosed until the age of fifty. By then her life had been full of utter chaos and she had children of her own, one of whom has inherited her illness. Fortunately for Jessie she had older sister Glenn to support her mentally and financially. As Jessie’s illness finally came under control her one wish was that her sister Glenn would help her to end the stigma against mental illness. At Jessie’s request, Glenn formed an organization called BringChange2Mind (they have a website) and Jessie is now an internationally recognized speaker, author, poet and advocate for mental health reform.

I found it hard to put this book down. The early chapters were a little confusing where she gives her family history, but once you get past this you quickly get absorbed into her story. I found it interesting that she has a “service dog” something I had never heard of before for mental illness.

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing
Year: 2014
ISBN No: 978-1-4555-4880-4

My Lovely Wife: a memoir of madness and hope
By: Mark Lukach

University students Mark and Giulia met at the age of 18, married at 24 and were happily married and living their dream life in San Francisco when their world suddenly changed. At the age of 27, Giulia had a psychotic break down after a short period of anxiety about her job. She suddenly became delusional and suicidal and was admitted to hospital. Mark found himself in a strange new world, where he was struggling to cope with not only his wife, but the whole mental health system. A few years later Giulia was well, things were back on track and Giulia gave birth to their son, Jonas. It wasn’t long before the cycle repeated itself and she was back in hospital. Mark was left to care for himself and the baby she was not interested in and he was at his wit’s end.

This book is Mark’s true story. It is HIS personal journey. As such it is raw, honest, sad, but at the same time hopeful. It has been criticized by others as containing too much self-wallowing on his part, but he was angry, grieving, exhausted and at times resentful. Personally, I found it great at giving me insight into the illness and I was in awe of how they managed to keep their marriage together. I would recommend it to others who have a family member or friend with Bi-Polar. (PS: Since the book was published they have another son!).

Originally published in America as “My Lovely Wife in the psych ward”

Publisher: Bluebird Books for Life
Year: 2014

Thank you to Lynette Rooyakkers for providing these book reviews. Lynette serves on the SF Taranaki committee and has been so good to us by providing us with her accounts of the books that she reads. I hope she encourages you to get out there and learn more! Thank you Lynette!
What we are currently wishing for:

- Brochure holders—ideally 3-4 steps (photo on right)
- 1 or 2 collapsible/wheel-able table for large meeting room (photo below)
- A vacuum. Our current one has a duct taped hose and the wheel falls off. If you have a spare in better shape that you would like to re-home, let us know!

Reach out if you can/would like to grant a wish!

Moving into our new offices had their advantages, but we never thought that we’d have one of the best views in town for Americarna!

The wet weather kept some away, but Area Manager Justin, Committee Co-Chair Colin and DHB Family and Whānau Advisor Jimi (pictured) as well as Jimi’s daughter delighted in seeing all the amazing cars rumble by. With this vantage point, we’ll likely make this an annual tradition and we hope to see you here in 2020!

It’s no surprise that as a non-profit we have several unmet needs that aren’t able to be met by our income. We often ask for funds, but we know that not everyone is in the position to offer. That’s why we have created this list and our 40 for 40 Campaign (more info on next page).
Our Mission: *Families and whanau experiencing mental illness are listened to, included, informed and connected.*

Our 40 years have seen a countless number of people champion our cause and support us with their time, talent and treasure. Join us in our 40 for 40 Anniversary Campaign and continue the legacy!

Consider supporting our **40 for 40 Anniversary Campaign** by offering your time, talent or treasure! Ideas are below & for more information or to get involved, reach out to 06 757 9300 or info@sftaranaki.org.nz!

### Consider offering time
- You could volunteer 40 minutes with us—we always have a need for small tasks around the office and can always use a spare hand.

### Consider offering your talent
- If you have a special talent or gift, consider offering it! We’re always in need of skills in design, organisation, writing and interviewing.
- Have an artistic flair? Consider creating some artwork that would make our office more inviting, beautiful and fun!

### Consider offering resources
- Join our $40 for 40 Club and make a tax deductible donation of $40. Our goal is to have 40 people make this pledge this year!
- Consider donating something from our wish list on the previous page. Support for us isn’t only funding for our work.

As a way of thanks, all who volunteer or donate will be added to our 40 for 40 Champions Board at our office and will be invited to our 40th Anniversary Celebrations later in the year!

All monetary donations are tax deductible and those made by cheque can be made out to SF Taranaki.

Alternatively, if you prefer internet payment, this can be set up with the following details:

**SF Taranaki—TSB:** 15-3942-0414737-01

Please place your **Name/s** under **Particulars** and **“Donation”** under **Reference**. A receipt can be issued upon request for tax credit purposes.

We thank you for considering supporting us with your donation.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL US**
06 757 9300
**OR EMAIL**
info@sftaranaki.org.nz