

Like Minds

Whakaitia te Whakawhiu i te Tangata

A Credible Consumer VOICE

The need to build a 'credible consumer voice' was a hot topic at the NAG hui in March.

NAG policy analyst Chris Hansen said credible consumer voices were needed regionally and nationally. 'There are issues specific to each geographical area – so there needs to be a strong regional voice, but there are also national issues that should be addressed at that level.'

The Ministry of Health mental health directorate, Mental Health Commission and Human Rights Commission, who all attended the hui, agreed there were real benefits to having an articulate and authoritative voice to talk to the media and a range of organisations about mental illness and stigma and discrimination issues.

Chris reiterated the view that there's no better voice to talk about stigma and discrimination than those who have experienced it.

"because often it's their voice that's been robbed."

'One reason is we know what the issues are and secondly, it's driven by the personal emotion of the injustice and I think that's a positive driving force. When you have that depth of feeling you want to own it, and it can fuel a powerful mode of communication. It is less likely to be discounted because people can't refute my personal experience, and it can be a powerful driving force in my own journey of recovery.'

Though other people can support the issues, she said it's the people who've experienced mental illness and stigma and discrimination who need to be given a voice, 'because often it's their voice that's been robbed. It is important to role model the empowerment we give lip service to –

and it needs to take place at all levels of public health and clinical health care delivery.'

She said the NAG – which gives national advice from a service user perspective – was privileged because it was backed up by the resources of the Like Minds, Like Mine project.

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At the NAG hui: Todd Kriebler and Arawhetu Peretini, mental health directorate, Ministry of Health; Mark Jacobs, Mental Health Commission; and Lena Simeon-Myles and Piripi Rikiti, members of the NAG's Māori caucus.

Mark Jacobs told the hui that many of the complex issues discussed cut across the roles of the Ministry, the Mental Health Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Health and Disability Commissioner. 'It's going to be important for us to coordinate our efforts and that we apply our collective strength to achieve change.'

Straight to the Point



Tēnā koutou,

Looking over the stories in this issue, I can't help being reminded that the success of this campaign relies so much on heroes. Those people courageous enough to stand up and tell their stories to the media, to their workmates; doctors speaking about their own learning experiences, and sharing their views on their own practices. It takes courage to talk about your intimate feelings and we should respect them all for doing that.

Just as it took a level of gutsiness for gay people to speak out in the early days of that movement for citizen's rights, it takes guts for people in our movement to speak out today – whether they be service users, clinicians, managers or funders. Because recovery isn't just important for us, the whole of the mental health field is on a journey of recovery in many ways.

Speaking of heroes, I would like to farewell and acknowledge Maria Glanville – who is resigning from her position on the National Advisory Group due to other commitments. Maria has done some groundbreaking work in her role in the NAG – and also as being a face in the first series of the Like Minds television ads. She has been a wonderfully bright star for not only Pacific people, but all of us who are working to fulfil the aims of this project.

Our voices are so important – and it is exciting that the Like Minds project, the Mental Health Commission and the Mental Health Foundation are joining forces to provide media training and support for people with experience of mental illness. This will help us to get a more balanced reporting of mental illness and put a human face to the issues – this is especially important in light of recent media coverage.

Best wishes,

Susie Crooks

Chair, National Advisory Group

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'I don't see us as the only voice, but I do see the NAG being uniquely positioned so we can speak to issues at a national level. We connect from different geographical areas, we have the ear of some groups and that's an advantage and a resource. We focus specifically on issues related to stigma and discrimination and we are the only national consumer group I know of who has that focus.'

NAG Pacific representative Vito Malo said building a credible voice would mean overcoming personality politics within the service user movement and there was also a skill shortage to be addressed.

Using the analogy of a rugby game, he said, everybody has the same goal in mind, but everyone's got a different game plan.

'I think we need a key group of people with identifiable skills who can speak to a diverse range of groups about mental illness and stigma and discrimination. At the moment we are like a team of individual players, you win the occasional one, but most of them you think, heck what's going on? We have the talent – we just need to pull it together as a team.'

Upskilling and empowering people with experience of mental illness is a key objective of the Like Minds project. The project is working with the Mental Health Commission to consider what media training and support it can jointly provide to a key group of service users. Project manager Gerard Vaughan said that training would likely occur later in the year. ➤

New Chair for COMMISSION

'It is a privilege to be given this trust, and I will work with the people using services, the people working in services and others in the sector to make this country a better place for people with mental illness,' says Jan Dowland.



Jan Dowland

Jan has been appointed chair of the Mental Health Commission and will take up her position at the end of July.

She says that while she has experience in working to counter the stigma and discrimination faced by people with intellectual disabilities, she is fully aware that people with mental illness come up against quite different barriers – and the ways of breaking down those barriers will require their own strategies.

'I am not about to do a wholesale transfer of my learning from IHC to mental health. I know that I don't yet understand all the issues but I think I am a good listener and I am looking forward to meeting the people involved in Like Minds and other anti-discrimination work, who will get me up to speed.'

Jan says that looking in from the outside, it appears that huge strides have been made in the provision of services for people with mental illness, but she is conscious of the huge amount of work to be done. She has always had a strong interest in mental health, and, she says, is delighted to have this opportunity to chair the Commission.

'I have a real commitment to consumers and families. In my previous job as head of IHC I made sure that they took a lead in defining what they need and want, and I will certainly bring this way of working to my role as chair of the Commission.' ➤

Multinational Paper Company a Leading Light Employer

An international papermaking company in the Bay of Plenty is proving that supportive work colleagues can make a big difference to a person's recovery from mental illness.

Norse Skog Tasman employee David Holmes has experience of mental illness and says the firm's health and wellbeing programmes are very progressive, as they're not just for people who have a physical illness, but for people with mental illness too.

'Norse Skog practices a safety policy of zero tolerance; no injury, sickness or accident is too trivial to address,' says David. 'The company values its employees and puts resources into both its core values and safety policy to ensure that this culture becomes normal behaviour, both in the workplace and beyond.'

He says excellent support from management, from colleagues and from whānau has been important in helping him cope with his illness. 'My colleagues know that if I sit and look gloomy then it is nothing they have done to cause this. Two or three times a year I am totally incapable of functioning and I have no fear of being disadvantaged for taking sick leave for mental health recovery, as I am aware my management will support me.'

The company has its head office in Norway, with operations in New Zealand, Australia, Asia, Canada, South America and Europe. David is employed as a procurement specialist, purchasing and supplying goods and services to ensure the mill continues to operate profitably. 'I am expected to compete in a global market. The fact that I achieve and exceed my stretch target in my yearly performance contracts bears witness to this fact. I don't consider myself a victim, but a psychiatric survivor.'

He knows prejudice still exists in the community and that people's perceptions can be cruel and



David Holmes – 'People need to know that it is possible to live well in recovery.'

hurtful. 'But I have survived suicide and I have a future. That is the reason I am standing up to be counted. Employees need to know that they will be supported and not disadvantaged when they are open about their needs.'

In Mental Health Awareness Week last year David spoke to the company's health and welfare forum. He says people were awe struck that someone was prepared to say they had a mental illness. 'At question time many spoke about their mates – there is a real need for information, a need for education in the community to get mental illness out of the closet. People need to know that it is possible to live well in recovery.'

David believes other companies could learn from Norse Skog's example. 'They could create a forum where they and their employees can operate in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and cooperation. Don't see health and safety as just another cost, but a doorway to increased productivity, a healthier workforce and a positive contribution to the community.'

He says he's proud to be associated with Ruth Gerzon of the Serious Fun 'N Mind Trust and her determination to make sure that stigma around mental illness becomes confined to the history books. 'The new Like Minds TV ads show that mental illness is no respecter of persons. Their impact and value is two-fold – they inspire courage, and de-power the notion that I am alone on those frequent occasions as I journey with mental illness.' ➤

THEY MADE a Difference

'You make the difference' was the message given in an awards ceremony held at the Theatre Royal in Nelson recently. Twelve people received certificates honouring their commitment at an afternoon tea set in the foyer of this historic theatre.



Presenting the awards, from left to right: Jan Wilkinson, Gaye Berry, Bernie Habbershaw, Margaret Savage and Kathy Harris.

'Here in Nelson there are many people who model respect and support for people with experience of mental illness and the ceremony was to publicly acknowledge how proud we are,' said Gaye Berry, Like Minds promoter. 'It also tied into the launch of the second phase of the mass media advertising. The new TV adverts created a lot of interest and the awards ceremony was a great way to tie the messages together.'

The awards attracted a huge response, with many nominations being received. The winners came from a wide cross-section of the community and included workers from mental health services, chemists, GPs, business operators, partners and friends.

'It takes a bunch of courageous and generous individuals to stand up and be counted on an issue like mental illness, which even today is still shrouded in fear and shame,' Gaye told those gathered at the ceremony.

'The Awards for Respect model ways of supporting people with experience of mental illness – and that's a great advance, especially given the commonality of mental illnesses among New Zealanders.' ➤

4 WOMEN Talk about their LIVES

The new Like Minds TV ads and the movie A Beautiful Mind have inspired people with experience of mental illness to stand up and talk about their recovery journeys.

Each of the stories we heard about underscored how vital it was to have the support and understanding of friends and family. Here are four women who shared their thoughts with their communities.



"You got to have friends..."

'We all need friends, but never more so than when we are unwell.' That was the message of 'friends' who gathered in Christchurch to promote the new Like Minds TV ads (right).

Pictured (top) is local Like Minds project secretary Linda Smith with her husband Terran. 'He and other friends were a major part of my recovery from illness. Without my friends I don't really believe I would be here today. That's how important they are.'

Linda says she was saddened that when she fell ill some friends disappeared.

'It was a real shock to me getting sick. Some people didn't feel I was worthwhile being with. That hurts, because I'm not a different person, I just happened to have an illness.'



Out of the Black Hole

All Black John Kirwan, like Winston Churchill, called it his black dog. Designer Denise L'Estrange-Corbet described it as a black cloud descending. For Susan Smith the experience of depression was like being in a black hole.

Mother of three and a nurse at Whakatane Hospital, Susan is today living life to the full. Key to her recovery has been the combined support of mental health services and her friends.

'Supporting a friend or relative with depression can be hard going and the negativity can be difficult to cope with,' says Susan. 'However, time with friends and relatives is vital and

friends can make sure people get the help they need.'

'A card or short letter received through the mail was so good. I would look at it over and over. A couple of friends were consistent and their messages gave me a lot of comfort.'

Looking back she says the best thing would have been to meet someone who'd had a similar experience. Someone who could say, 'I got better and so will you.'

Her local mental health services were also crucial. Medication was important, but so was counselling. 'My counsellor gave me strength and insight. Courses helped me learn new ways of thinking, like dealing effectively with anger and guilt – techniques that I now use in daily life.'

She said everyone should know that although the 'black hole' is very black, there is light at



Susan Smith

the end of the tunnel. 'Although the road to recovery might seem long and difficult at times, with help we all get there. I am now living life to the full. So thank you to all friends and families who stick with it and support people, and to mental health service staff – your work is essential to the mental health of our community.'

Like Minded About 'A Beautiful Mind'

Like Minded groups rallied around the country in support of the Russell Crowe movie A Beautiful Mind.

The movie opened nationwide last month and starred Crowe in the role of John Nash Jnr, a Nobel prize-winning mathematician who has lived with schizophrenia for 30 years.

Letters to the editor, feature stories, news articles, information displays, special premier screenings and after-movie gatherings helped illuminate the importance of the movie to the work of Like Minds providers.

In Blenheim a theatre full of people were introduced to the movie by Sherryn Moynihan, consumer advisor to the Public Health Unit, Wairau.

'I hope that this movie is the beginning of a major shift where people who are having a hard time with difficult, painful and often disabling symptoms are treated with the dignity, compassion and respect they deserve.'

The movie reinforced many of the things that people who are committed to mental health

recovery believe. 'People who experience these symptoms are some of the most brilliant people in our society – people who can find solutions to serious problems and whose talents enhance our lives.'

'We can do the things we want to do and be the way we want to be. The world will miss out on our great potential if we don't have the opportunities to recover or if we are mistreated or badly treated as almost happened in this case.'

She emphasised that there were many roads to recovery. 'Those of us who have these symptoms, even symptoms that persist, can learn to live effectively with or without our symptoms. We can control our minds and sort out the difference between delusions and reality. We can devise innovative ways to address our symptoms and or delusions so they don't overtake our lives.'

Being supported by loving family members, colleagues and the community, and being treated with dignity, compassion and respect helps, she said. 'It may even be essential to relieving symptoms. It helps us to recover and achieve our dreams and goals.'

When the movie screened in Christchurch, Like Minds project secretary Pam Barnett and her good friend of 40 years, Wendy Paris, spoke to their local newspaper, *The Press*, about their support for each other. Pam says the loyalty and trust displayed in *A Beautiful Mind* had parallels in her friendship with Wendy.

'Life without Wendy in these last 40 years would have been different and almost bereft in a certain way because she's been such a wonderful friend. She's been there, she hasn't intruded, but she's helped me through various patches as nobody else attempted to do.'

Wendy said she had gained as much as she had given. She respected Pam's courage and her ability to come back at life after she had a bad episode with her illness. She said she also valued Pam's unique outlook and understanding of life which has resulted from her experience of extreme highs and lows. 'Some of us, who are more matter of fact, don't experience that kind of heightened awareness.'

Like John Nash, Pam reflected that she was greater than her illness. 'I am far more than my illness, but my illness is still part of me.'



Photo: The Press

'We can do the things we want to do and be the way we want to be. The world will miss out on our great potential if we don't have the opportunities to recover'

Wendy Paris (left) and Pam Barnett.

Community Voices

Strengthening Consumer Participation in the Project

There's a quote that Suzy Stevens uses to underscore the importance of Community Voices.

■ Some stories enhance life; others degrade it. So we must be careful about the stories we tell, about the ways we define ourselves and other people.'

Suzy is the project manager of the Community Voices Training and Information Resource – a national Like Minds tool being developed and produced by the Mental Health Foundation.

The overall aim of the project, says Suzy, is to work towards Speakers Bureaus and Community Voices being developed and devolved to networks of people with experience of mental illness throughout the country.

Community Voices is the name used to describe the public speaking resource and training process for consumers and Speakers Bureau is then the name used by an established group of trained speakers.

'It's our hope that this resource will contribute to an increase in consumer ownership and delivery of aspects of the Like Minds project,' she says. 'Community Voices speaking engagements, educational seminars and Speakers Bureaus are ways in which the voices of people who have experience of mental illness can be heard and taken notice of in our communities.'

The consumer steering group set up to advise the project met in Wellington recently. Made up from people representing all four regions who are involved in the project, the group has been reviewing work to date and surveying Like Minds providers in their areas to determine what is currently happening in the training and supporting of people to speak about mental illness.

'There were huge variances reported from the regions,' says Suzy. 'In some areas there are Speakers Bureaus up and running and in others, if public speaking occurs at all it is often done in a haphazard or ad hoc kind of way. An interesting and important piece of feedback at the meeting was that there is some misunderstanding by people in the

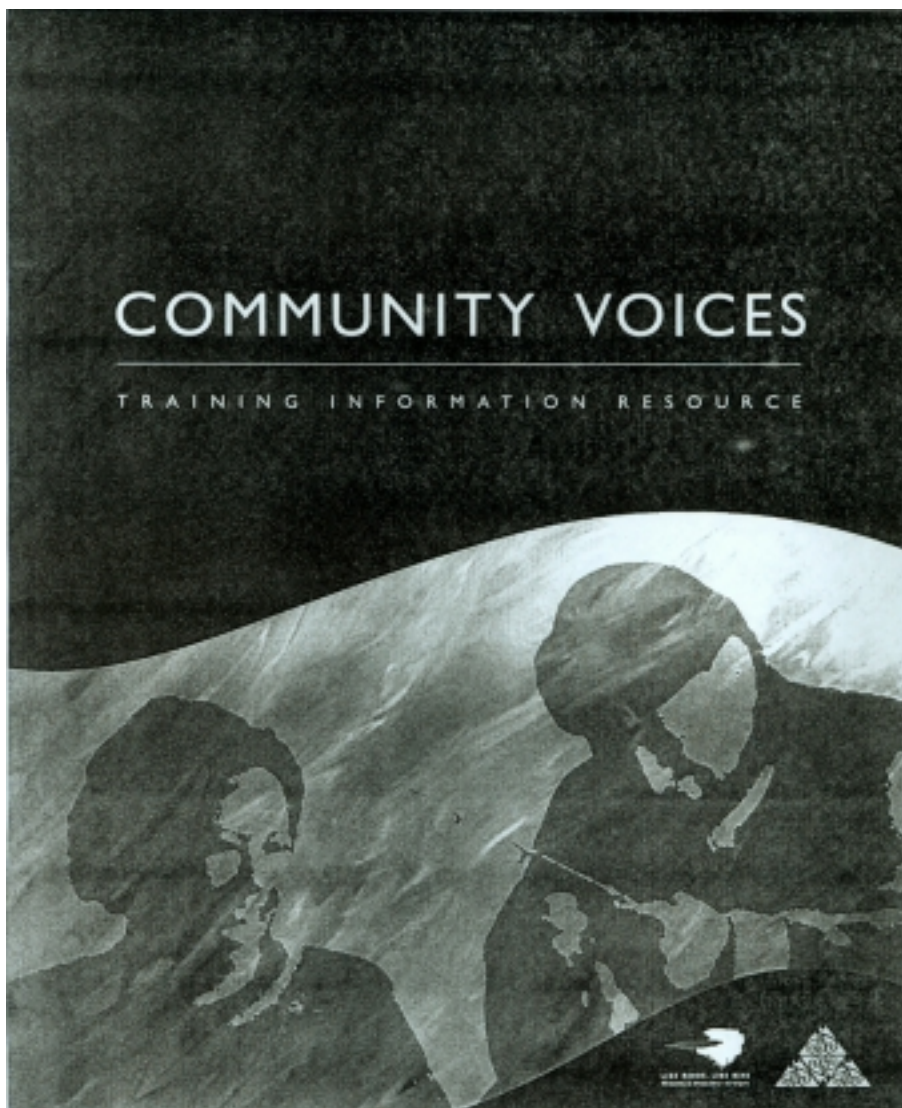
project about what Community Voices and Speakers Bureau are, and that often Community Voices is confused with Hearing Voices. So one of our first recommendations will be about how to clear up that confusion, starting from now,' she said.

Hearing Voices is the experiential workshop developed by Pat Deagan in the USA and used by a small number of trained consumers here to try and give workshop participants an understanding of what it is like to hear voices associated with the experience of mental illness.

The Community Voices Training and Information Resource will include information on how to plan and deliver training as well as organising speaking engagements and will be available to existing Speakers Bureaus, consumer trainers and consumer groups in July. It is hoped that a process will be established for ensuring training and the development of Bureaus will be developed consistently across the country.

Suzy says the information gathered by the steering group will form the basis for recommendations on how to contract for Community Voices training and the establishment of Speakers Bureaus over the next few years.

'Those of us already involved in public speaking from a personal perspective see it as a powerful and integral part of the campaign to counter discrimination,' says Suzy. 'We sincerely hope that people will support the Community Voices training and development of Speakers Bureaus because it sure is one way to improve and strengthen consumer participation in the Like Minds, Like Mine project.' ➤



Opening Doors

Hutt Valley DHB is opening doors so people can learn more about mental illness.

Local consumer advisors to the DHB's Regional Public Health team, a Like Minds provider, have created a DIY manual for running education seminars on mental illness from a consumer perspective.

Called *Opening Doors to Understanding*, the manual builds on the work of the Speakers Bureau where people share their personal stories with an audience, says author Sarah Gordon.

'People were asking our Speakers Bureau for longer seminar-type sessions so they could learn more about mental illness and discuss ways of responding to stigma and discrimination in their workplace and in their community.'

According to Sarah the demand for more in depth information has been the result of greater public awareness raising, supported by policy and legislation changes.

To ensure consistency and quality of training, she said it was obvious that there needed to be a resource to help people run presentation seminars, 'but (as is common) money was an issue'.

Enter Jillian Barclay McIntosh and her team at Regional Public Health.

'We went to see Jillian and said we think this resource will be really valuable, we are getting more and more requests for these presentations, we need to work on it and can you help? She was great, very supportive,' said Sarah.

Jillian said Hutt Valley DHB's expectations had always been exceeded by the Speakers Bureau presentations, which were consistently high quality and favourably received.

'The resource also had a fit with our philosophy of supporting consumer-presented seminars which we know has the greatest impact with the public.'

But, Jillian says, it's the partnership that developed between the public health team and the Speakers Bureau that's been most rewarding.

'Having *Opening Doors* allows participation in the whole Like Minds project by a larger number of people with experience of mental illness. Training is consistent and they can have greater confidence knowing they are using a well-researched resource. It also allows for skill development, which is an aim of the project.'

A team of local consumer advisors peer reviewed *Opening Doors* and so far 30 copies have been distributed to Like Minds providers.

Early indications are promising.

'Adds confidence to my delivery' ... 'flexibility in being able to be adjusted to reach a wide audience' ... 'gives structure and consistency' are some of the comments coming back.

Sarah has used the resource with under-grad and post-grad nursing students, who she says have been absolutely blown away by the combination of personal stories and learning exercises.

Although the manual is for people without prior experience of seminar presentation, people have asked Sarah to provide training – so she and colleague Sara McCook Weir have written a companion training manual called *A Kick Start to Opening Doors*.

Sarah is also involved in the Like Minds government agency policy work in Wellington (see story this page). She has an educational background in law and ethics and is called



Sarah Gordon with the *Opening Doors* Resource.

upon by numerous organisations for her expertise.

For Sarah, *Opening Doors* represents the optimum in mental health education. 'It provides us with a tool to formally educate people about mental health from an experiential perspective.' ➤

Experienced Minds For Govt Work

Some experienced minds have joined the Mental Health Foundation to continue the coordination of the Project's work with government agencies.

With the recent departure of Clive Hullet from the Foundation, Sarah Gordon of Case Consulting has been helping keep up the momentum of this work.

And Gael Sturgeon has more recently joined the team as project coordinator. Gael has an extensive background in rights movements, particularly issues of legislation, policy and practice. She has just come back from a two year stint in London, where she worked with the 'Mental Health Media' project.

At a national level the focus is on departmental policy – reviewing policy that discriminates against people with experience of mental illness, recommending changes and then supporting government agencies to implement the changes.

As part of the review process, the government agency project teams will look at trauma, OSH policies and core training competencies – 'anything that affects people with experience of mental illness who have contact with the organisation, whether they be staff or clients,' says Sarah.

At a regional level the emphasis is on education,

training and attitudinal change. Sarah says regional Like Minds providers have been recording in detail how they get access into agencies, how they negotiate training and education with these agencies, and the methods they use to deliver the training.

'We've had great feedback so far. Providers appear to be well down the track of implementing their training and education sessions with government agencies.'

Independent evaluator Nona Milburn is analysing this regional and national work. The result will be a detailed assessment of the work that is being done with the three key agencies – Police, Ministry of Social Development, and health services. That report will be completed by the end of July.

Working with government agencies through policy development and education – especially agencies that have frequent contact with mental health service users – is a strategic objective of the Like Minds project.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Sarah at s.gordon@paradise.net.nz ➤

Tu Tangata Motuhake!

Introducing two more members of the Like Minds National Advisory Group ...

Wi Huata

“Ko Tāwhirirangi, Whakapunaki me Kahuranaki hoki ngā maunga,

Ko Ngaruroro, Mohaka, me Wairoa hoki ōku awa,

Ko Ngāti Hāwea, Ngāti Tama te Rangī, Ngāti Pāhauwera āku hapū.

Ko Kahungunu te iwi.

Ko Tākitimu te waka.

Ko Wi Te Tau ahau.

I am currently employed fulltime at Te Whare Hauora o Ngongotaha (Māori provider, Lakes DHB) as programmes co-ordinator, running journey to wellness programmes that use Māori models of practice in a Māori kaupapa environment. I also freelance as a kaiako in wānanga working with youth at risk, prisons, rehabilitation centres and with Māori mental health staff.

I've been involved in the Like Minds project for three years and was introduced to it through Jennie Hawera, of the Serious Fun 'N Mind Trust, at the national Māori hui held in Kirikiriroa.

My participation in the NAG has allowed me to become more effective in my mahi and more able to address stigma and discrimination with others without fear of judgement or ridicule. It has also helped me to establish networks throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and to meet with other movers and shakers of the Like Minds project.

Key areas of work I want to focus on and are most interested in as a NAG member include: establishing strong Māori networks and consolidating a strong Māori caucus within the NAG; working with Elva Edwards and the Māori caucus to establish an orientation for Māori providers within the project; developing user-friendly and culturally-sensitive arenas for the Community Voices project; and supporting other NAG members when needed.

My work with the NAG complements my mahi by assisting other tangata motuhake to overcome the whakamā (shame) attached to mental illness. We can turn that whakamā into a positive attitude for better self esteem and to help tangata motuhake kick-start their own journey to wellness by coming from a place of knowing. Through the NAG I am also able to access recovery tools that promote closure for personal issues around mental illness.

The authentic voice and face of tangata whaiora is the key to promoting mental wellness. 'Yesterday is the past, tomorrow is the future and today is the gift, that is why we call it the PRESENT'. Reducing stigma and discrimination must be a priority, otherwise it stifles the spirit and denies growth. It promotes good will to all mankind.

He hōnora, he korōria ki te Atua he maungārongo ki te whenua, he whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa. Tihei mauriora!



Brothers in arms ... Piripi Rikiti (left) and Wi Huata.

Piripi Rikiti

For Piripi Rikiti, being a member of the NAG complements his work as a consumer representative with Canterbury DHB's forensic mental health services in Christchurch.

He believes reducing stigma and discrimination must be a priority – in keeping with the medical and technological advances now happening in the mental health sector.

'Working with mental health professionals so they acquire a better understanding of the dynamics of discrimination and stigma is a key focus of my work with the NAG. Our work must contribute to improving the quality of mental services currently available to people around the country.

'The authentic voice and face of tangata whaiora is the key to understanding the dynamics of Māori mental health. The tangata whaiora perspective gives everyone a valuable insight to the experience of mental illness.'

Building strategic relationships, especially with government and non-government agencies, is another priority for Piripi. 'We have to strengthen our capacity as a group, and that means having input and giving advice where it is needed. I will work with the other NAG members to achieve this.'

Piripi is the Southern Māori representative on the NAG, though he was born and raised in Rotorua – where he returned earlier this year for the NAG hui. 'It was wonderful being there. The warmth and the welcome we had from the tangata whenua was beautiful – it was like coming home.' ➤

'Hearing Voices' Workshop More Than Expected!

Clinical staff at MidCentral and GPs recently attended a Hearing Voices workshop in Palmerston North, facilitated by Susie Crooks and Elva Edwards of The Lighthouse in Hawkes Bay – a consumer-run service and Like Minds provider. Doctor Darryl Prince was so impressed, she forwarded these comments ...

My expectation of the workshop was to de-stigmatise and demystify voice-hearing experiences. My belief was that this would lead to a greater tolerance and understanding of the phenomenon. In fact the reality was more. I learned that voice-hearing experiences and ways of coping are different for every individual. I learned that it is no longer appropriate for me to take a detached

professional stance about my clients who hear voices, and I could consider different ways of supporting them.

During the structured workshop, I was encouraged by the dedication and frankness of the facilitators (who themselves hear voices), the problem-centred and here-and-now emphasis they created to highlight most effectively the complexities of living with voices. On the other hand, I was so tormented and distracted by the plagues presence of disembodied speech encircling me. I felt almost paralysed by an inescapable reactivity to the unrelenting torment and harshness of some of the voices. I could not escape a pervasive sense of alienation and confusion which made me challenge and disclose myself. This experience emphasised that I must reflect on my role as a mental health physician and develop my understanding of the experiences of my individual clients.

For me this workshop was liberating and I can safely say the journey is not yet over.



Darryl Prince (right) with Manawatu Like Minds convenor Angela Young.

I would highly recommend the 'Hearing Voices' workshop to all doctors because such experiential exercises could give one a deeper understanding of the experience of psychosis. Such understanding would truly benefit our clients.

Perhaps, paradoxically, it is in literally listening to the cries of our clients with psychosis that we as physicians can begin to find a pathway through the convoluted maze of our own particular distress in managing them." ➤

Spotlight on Carter Center Fellowships

The Like Minds Media Award has taken a new international direction this year.

Unlike previous years, where the emphasis has been on news stories already published and broadcast, the 2002 Award will celebrate and promote this year's New Zealand recipients of the Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Journalism Fellowships.

'The Like Minds Media Award has been very helpful to our cause of raising stigma and discrimination issues in the media, and acknowledging journalists who have done a great job of providing balanced and informed coverage of mental illness issues,' says Like Minds Project Manager Gerard Vaughan.

'But now we want to reach news editors who have influence in a newsroom or senior journalists, especially those with the Police, Courts and Crime rounds. It is these reporters who deal with the harder issues around mental illness and who file stories that can have a lasting impact on people with experience of mental illness.'

He said senior journalists were more likely to be more attracted to an international award like the Carter Center Fellowships, particularly if it allowed them to extend their knowledge of mental health issues outside of New Zealand.

'And that has to be of benefit for our work.' Supporting the Carter Center Fellowships had the added bonus of allowing the Project access to the research completed by the New Zealand Fellows. 'This research will give us some in depth information that's valuable to the movement

to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.'

Applications to the Fellowships closed on 5th May and the New Zealand judging panel is now assessing the research project proposals submitted by journalists. The panel will make a shortlist that will be submitted to the Carter Center which will make final selections and announce the two winners in early July.

The successful Fellows receive a \$12,000 grant as well as two paid return trips to the US to visit the Carter Center in Atlanta.

This is the second time the Fellowships have been offered in New Zealand. Mike Gourley of Radio New Zealand and John Francis of Tearaway Magazine were the 2001 Fellows. Their research projects will be completed in September.

Mike is researching and analysing the effect of current media practice on public perceptions of people with experience of mental illness. He will evaluate the impact of the Like Minds project and compare and contrast it to similar practices in Australia and the US. His research will be featured in three 40-minute National Radio documentaries and live discussions. John Francis is preparing a 12-part series for youth about mental health issues. He will define mental health for this age group, shed light on common mental illnesses, and profile some youth affected by mental illness.

Gerard says the Carter Center was hoping the Fellowships would become self-sustaining in New Zealand in 2003 and discussions about the project's continued involvement were underway with Ray Nairn, who is the New Zealand representative on the Fellowship Advisory Board. ➤

THE CARTER CENTER



Provider Vox Pops

Continuing our profiles of the faces behind the Like Minds project in their communities, this issue we put the questions to Marg Price in Gisborne and Jillian Barclay McIntosh in the Hutt Valley ...

Margaret Price

Turanga Health, Tairāwhiti

Kia ora koutou. My name is Margaret Price, a mother to two neat kids, and Nani-Ma to five mokopuna – Latrell, Manaia, Cruze and the latest addition, twins Karepa and Riata. That's the best job in the world and my other job for the past three and a half years has been as coordinator of the Like Minds Project at Turanga Health for Tairāwhiti communities. Turanga Health services the three iwi of Ngai Tamanuhiri, Rongowhakaata and Te Aitanga A Mahaki, and provides many hauora services to all people of Turanganui-A-Kiwa, including miri miri, rongoa, tamariki and whānau hauora, kaumātua and rangatahi programmes, men's wellness and disability support services – to name a few.

The Start Up:

The language that people spoke! It blew me away. I understand most of it now, but way back then it was exhausting and Olive and I would look at each other with blank looks and laugh! Another thing that stood out was 'what was I going to do?' I had a job description but because no one had done it before, I didn't get orientation!

Most Indispensable:

Joe Biddle, Olive Lewis, Georgi Leaf, Genesis Potini, who have been there with me since day dot, who have been instrumental in developing our workshops and continue delivering them into our fourth year! Others like Matewa Kaa, Judith Rickard, Juliet Bowen, Charmaine Turei, Materoa Pokai, Rotu Pipi-Wiremu, who continue to support me in ways that would blow you away. I had better stop naming names because I'll miss someone out and you know they'll come and chew my ear. Freddy Maynard, manager of Te Irirangi O Turanganui A Kiwa, our local Māori radio station, and his 'TUMEKE' staff who allow us air time to deliver our important messages. He even put our posters up in the front foyer, and not in the loo.

Biggest Buzz:

I have many.

The one that reduced me to tears was when Joe Biddle took up the role of Like Minds kaumātua. This man has been instrumental in providing our teams with spiritual, mental, physical and personal safety as we travel

around not only our community but nationally as well. He has so much knowledge, not only around tikanga Māori but also around mental health services. His institutional experience has been such a valuable story to pass on to others – and when people hear it they understand us clearly when we say people with experience of mental illness need to live and participate in their communities and recover with the aroha and support of whānau and friends, not sent away to institutions and alienated from these vital support systems.



A hiko through Gisborne – a 'big buzz'.

Others are Kay Robin winning a Like Minds Māori Media Award for one of our radio shows, and our hiko celebrating World Health Day. You never know who will come, and boy they came!

Scary Moments:

We were delivering our 'Debunking the Myths' workshop to a class and we had quite a hostile group. There had been a very sad recent murder at an ACC office and a class member was quite closely related to the deceased. When we addressed the mythical issue around people with mental illness being violent, a core group became quite aggressive towards us. Basically they didn't want to hear what we had to say and that was OK. We took a tea break to regroup and decided not to deliver the rest of the workshop, but the three facilitators told their own personal stories. This went down well.

Learning Curve:

That this project is too big for one person! I've had many sleepless nights thinking about all the people I hadn't reached and how I was going to do it. I used to doubt my own ability to get the job done and often felt I was failing. I was relating all this to Helyn Beveridge, who was the Like Minds coordinator for NPE Hamilton, and she had the same thing happening in her life. She then said, 'I used to

think this job was too big for Helyn Beveridge, but now I know this job is too big for one person', and you know it was a Godsend, because I don't worry about what I haven't done, but focus on my achievements. Thanks matey!

Advice To Others:

Networks. Take copious amount of time to introduce yourself and the Like Minds kaupapa to anyone and everyone. Do not rush this process. Once people got to know me and what drives me, they became very supportive. I'm now at the stage that when I need support for the kaupapa, I contact all my networks and they drag their networks along too and heaps of people start to turn up to things. Then they spread the message too! Target the key people in your community, the mayor, MPs, and kaumātua. People who have a bit of mana! Get good supervision. Thanks Pam Bain. Lastly, always provide heaps of kai and transport. That's why I love Turanga Health, because they do that as part of their service delivery anyway so I don't have any trouble getting the pūtea.

What's Next?

I really want to get into 'Partnerships in the Community'. Bevan Holtz spoke of this concept years ago, and to me it is very logical to get the community to come up with, and deliver destigmatisation and anti-discrimination projects within their culture – whether it be a sporting, education or recreational culture. People in these groups are paid to do all the hard mahi and we all win.

10 Years On:

That all mental health services WANT to give up the power, and work with and alongside tangata whaiora – and their services reflect this shift. That there is less reliance on medication and the clinical perspective, that alternatives are accepted like the power of karakia, miri miri and rongoa and, as Joe always says, 'what about my willpower?' That our communities are as accepting toward people with mental illness as they are toward gay people. I say this because I lived in that time when gay people were outcast and it was a taboo take then, just like mental illness. Then someone began a gay movement, legislation was passed and now gay people are proud of who they are and are open about their sexuality too. And so they should be and so should tangata whaiora. Lastly, that we don't use kupu like tangata whaiora or consumers because there is no need to.

Jillian Barclay McIntosh

Regional Public Health, Hutt Valley
District Health Board Wellington.

I have been the coordinator of the Mental Health Promotion programme since its inception in mid 1997. This programme covers three mental health streams: the Like Minds Project, Mental Health Promotion and Youth Suicide Prevention. The Like Minds Project team



Jillian (left) with Minister of Health Annette King and MP Liz Gordon.

includes people with mental health promotion skills, plus people with experience of mental illness. Together we work as partners. The team is wonderfully enthusiastic, innovative and totally committed and it is a privilege to work with them. The success of the Wellington 'Like Minds' Project, is the result of our combined hard work. We also have a subcontract with Choice Health Wairarapa, where we have one part-time mental health promoter working with a similar dedicated group of people with experience of mental illness.

The Start Up:

Completing an assessment of the region, followed by consultation with the only incorporated consumer group in the area at the time, the Wellington Mental Health Consumers Union, which agreed to act as the professional advisor to the project. We both acknowledged each others' strengths – experience of mental illness and knowledge of health promotion theories and practice. This made an ideal partnership team and has been very positive for us all. Help was requested from the Mental Health Foundation to thrash out the meaning of mental health promotion, as it was a very new concept.

Most Indispensable:

The establishment of a reference group, which is a key aspect of our working style and a unique and highly successful approach. It has an important 'governance' role, and all major decisions about the direction, planning, implementation or funding are referred to the group for consideration and agreement. Members include seven consumer advisers, representation from the Wellington Mental Health Consumers Union, SFNZ Wellington,

the mental health services of the two District Health Boards in the Wellington region, and the mental health promotion team at Regional Public Health. At least three consumers must be present for any decision to be made. This shows we are not just talking about the importance of consumer involvement but are actually 'walking the talk'. Over the years the group has grown in strength. Most importantly it gives continuity and stability to our project and embodies the meaning of true partnership.

Biggest Buzz:

- Our very first project – designing and facilitating a very comprehensive Mental Health Awareness workshop. It gave us our first major impetus and put us 'on the map' in the Wellington region and nationally. As with all our workshops, our philosophy is consumer facilitation and delivery. Four years on, the positive feedback and wonderful stories we receive continue to contribute to the project's ongoing success story in the Wellington region.

There have been lots of 'big buzzes' since then, like the development of the Speakers Bureau and public speaking training of its members and the new consumer-developed resource, 'Opening Doors to Understanding' (see story on page 7).

Scary Moments:

Not so much scary as 'anxious moments' when we looked at the enormity of the task in hand. Attending the first 'Like Minds' conference in Rotorua in 1999 and facing the strong and controversial opinions of the various groups. Trying to persuade angry factions that a Health Promotion (population health) approach was the best way to make social change. Wondering if we were doing the right activities. Were we making a difference? Would anyone come on our hikoi through the city centre?

Learning Curve:

- Acknowledging we had expertise in health promotion but didn't have strengths in the area of mental health or the experience of having a mental illness, and asking for advice and support. The advice of consumers continues to be a primary guiding force with respect to all aspects of our project work.
- Setting a payment policy that recognised the valuable contribution of consumers.
- Continually reviewing and increasing consumer involvement. Looking back, we are continually amazed that, with a lot of thoughtful discussion, we got so much right first time.
- Working alongside Māori and Pacific peoples groups.
- Learning that a year spent on a good

consultation process initially would have saved those of us at the operational level a lot of angst when it came to implementation later on.

- Realising that what worked well one year doesn't necessarily work successfully the next year, and learning from those experiences. For instance, non-attendance at workshops taught us that people are more likely to attend a workshop they have paid to attend than if it is offered free.

Advice to Others:

This is the most difficult and demanding health promotion project to work with and the most rewarding. Spend time talking and consulting with those who have the necessary knowledge and expertise and draw in and work with people who are as passionate about the project as you are. Leave behind the fighting factions – they will still be fighting when the battle is won. Stay focused on the objectives of the project. Concentrate on a few things and do them well, rather than a lot of little activities. Celebrate your successes, and allow yourselves the odd seriously interesting 'screw up'. Take care of yourself and each other.



The Regional Public Health team, from left: Jillian, Karen Veldhoen and Mary Strang.

What's Next:

Times are changing, we sense there is heightened public awareness of mental health issues. What is less obvious is the behaviour change that should follow this awareness. We are becoming more focused on the agencies that have most contact with people with a mental illness, rather than a broad sweep approach, and our workshops are being structured to meet the needs of these individual agencies and highlight the behaviour changes required. The 'National Agencies Project' is well timed to fit in with our new approach and we are already working with Housing NZ, Police and health services.

10 Years On:

We know that a health promotion approach to social change takes time. Let us hope the benefits of the huge time and resources we are now using will be obvious. There will be an (almost) zero tolerance to stigma and discrimination and we will all be taking great care of our mental health. There will be new issues and new people with passion and great ideas to carry on our groundbreaking work. ➤

THE HOUSE of Hearts

A man with a big heart and a big house has made a desperate plea for people to open, not close, their doors on people with experience of mental illness.

far removed from that. 'Usually, tangata whai ora very politely hear "sorry, no vacancies at the moment", and it's at this point that my front door bell at Ashworth House starts to ring. If I have a room available it is offered to whoever comes to the door, provided that they meet the criteria I have in place that makes Ashworth House a safe, clean place for **anybody** to live in.'

Wayne said he has a strong belief in the edict that people should be treated 'the way we would ourselves like to be treated. And I think deep down that same edict exists in every single one of us. So why are there only two places in the whole of Gisborne prepared to actively take in people with a mental health background?'

Wayne Fouhy owns Ashworth House in Gisborne, a boarding home that offers accommodation to anybody who needs a room, including people with experience of mental illness. But due to ill health, Wayne will soon sell his establishment and is worried that what he offers now may not be available in the future.

Guest speaker at Turanga Health's Awards for Respect ceremony, he highlighted the chronic shortage of proper accommodation for people with experience of mental illness.

Wayne is a three-time nominee and two-time winner of a Like Minds Award for Respect – for showing sustained respect to people with mental illness. He is one of the few general accommodation services in the area that welcomes service users.

'Apart from the interim places of accommodation run by mental health professionals, what else really exists out there in the community without prejudice, without bias, without stigma ... that actually says "welcome" and how long are you wanting to stay?' Those are the words that others hear when they walk through the doors of a house of accommodation.'

The reality for tangata whaiora, he says, is



Wayne Fouhy is not afraid to speak his mind – 'Everyone has a voice, just let it be heard'.

The answer, he says, is quite simple. 'It is because the prejudice, ignorance and social stigma that has existed all this time is still alive and well in our society – even today. But the good news is that it's not as bad as it used to be thanks to increased mental health awareness and the work of Like Minds.'

The solutions, he said, lay with the 160 people in the room. 'Every single person here has a voice, just let it be heard. Be an advocate whenever and wherever you can for tangata whaiora. The more we are seen to be treating and accepting mental health consumers as everyday people in our society, the easier it is going to become for our people to lead normal lives.' ➤

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LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE

The project to counter stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness is an initiative of the Ministry of Health.