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# Like Minds

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WHAKAITIA TE WHAKAWHIU I TE TANGATA

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8 – 14 October 2007 marks New Zealand Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's theme is –

### Who we are and where we stand Ko Papatūānuku tōku tūrangawaewae

*Kia ū to ū Kāwai tūpuna, kia mātauria ai,  
i ahu mai ī hea, e anga ana koe kō hea.*

*Trace out your ancestral stem, so that it may be known where  
you come from and in which direction you are going.*

*(Te Rarawa)*

The aim of this year's theme is to value our diversity as New Zealanders, both in our range of cultures and our experience of mental illness, and to recognise our connection with the land as tangata whenua and more recent immigrants.

The message is that mental wellbeing benefits from celebrating uniqueness, connection with others, sharing of our stories and supporting each other in our journeys.

#### 1. "Celebrating our uniqueness: Whakanui i tō tātou ahurei."

New Zealanders come from around one hundred cultures or ethnicities. Each culture or ethnicity's uniqueness may be illustrated by the languages you can speak, the arts and crafts you practice, the clothes you wear or the food you cook and like to eat.

The whakatauki (Te Rarawa proverb above) describes the importance for Māori of having a deep understanding of where they are from, their waka or canoe, mountain, river, iwi, hapū as well as their tūpuna (ancestors).

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## 2. “Connecting with each other: Hononga tētahi ki tētahi.”

The foundation for mental wellbeing is connection with the land and connection with people.

People who get less social and emotional support from others are more likely to experience health problems. Belonging to a social network of communication and mutual obligation makes people feel cared for, loved, esteemed and valued.

## 3. “Supporting others in their journey: Tautoko i ētahi atu e māuiui ana.”

We all have a part to play in creating families and communities that value the membership and participation of people with experience of mental illness. Discrimination and social exclusion can have a profound negative affect on our mental health. The way we treat each other has a powerful impact on the health of individuals and communities. Layton Toi shares his experience of how the people who care about him, supported him throughout his journey.

### Layton Toi

My name is Layton Toi and like many other New Zealanders I have had experience of mental illness.

As I look back on my diagnosis and years of unwellness, then wellness, then unwellness – and so on until today where I enjoy recovery practically every minute of every day, I kind of wonder where did it all start? I have told my story on many occasions and on each occasion I have learnt something new.

One thing I have learnt was that my journey began as a little boy. I did not like who I was and could not accept myself as anything worthwhile at primary school age, or as a young teenage man. As far as I was concerned, by the time I was an adult, I was nothing that was worthwhile, I was unwell and extremely unsettled. So what helped?

Friends took the time to love me for all those things they saw that were good and great about me that I never, ever saw in myself. Then they told me about them.

They showed me immense amounts of love, that I'd never experienced before. Their love developed in me a love for those things that were a part of me. It gave me the courage to find other good qualities in me. I wanted to create more beautiful experiences for my family, my friends and for myself.

I think that a lot of unwellness boils down to who we believe we are or are not.

I think we hear too much negative input either as a joke or a serious statement and if that happens long enough, it becomes



Layton Toi draws strength from his friends and the land



Steve Carter with his campervan in the big outdoors

our reality. But, in the same way, so can positive warm statements become a reality (including those that must come from ourselves). I think strength comes from knowing the great and beautiful things that are truly part of you. And that is the challenge.

Today, I love who I am and I love where my life is going. I agree with the saying, ‘it’s all about whānau!’ For each of us, our whānau includes all those people who are significant in our recovery and in our wellness.

I also agree with the waiata ‘He Kākano Ahau’ that says each of us has within ourselves seeds of greatness, planted by our ancestors, our fathers and our mothers – who are still with us and who have long gone before us.

I hope we can all plant seeds of greatness so that our children, grandchildren and so on can know and sing the song, ‘He Kākano Ahau!’ I believe and honestly want other people to truly believe that they have seeds of greatness in them – so the words of the waiata have real

meaning for them. Heoi anō.

## 4. “Sharing our stories: Whakaputa i ā tātou kōrero.”

The stories of how we all came to be here are varied and we hope during Mental Health Awareness Week that there will be opportunities for people to share their histories. Here are two unique stories from people who now call New Zealand home.

### Steve Carter

I came to New Zealand for the first time in 2004 and I still haven’t left. I arrived with the idea of settling and that’s exactly what I’ve done.

I’d travelled to this part of the world before and was introduced to a completely different type of lifestyle and sense of space in Australia. I’m a big fan of mountains, so a friend suggested that I visit New Zealand. I came on a tourist visa, poked around and completely fell for the South Island as soon as my feet touched the ground here.



Lucia and William's wedding day at Orakei Marae

After the ferry trip through the Marlborough Sounds I thought – “this is it”. I loved Golden Bay and then travelling through the wild West Coast nailed it. The Mainland has exactly the space and natural beauty that I came looking for.

I ended up at “Formerly the Blackball Hilton” in Greymouth and stayed and worked in the hotel for five months. I had a really, really good time getting to know the place, and connecting with the bolshy, down-to-earth Coasters. Now I live and work in Christchurch.

Moving to the other side of the world completely disconnects you from family and the people that you knew and grew up with. Although I have a couple of ex-pat friends who share the same point of view, it was more important to me to have connected to real Kiwis and I have always felt a lot of support from friends I have in Christchurch and the West Coast and now all over New Zealand.

My home is in the New Brighton community, just two minutes from the beach. It's a quirky, hippy, alternative part of Christchurch and I have a great group of friends out there. I was at my friend's place the other night entertaining the kids and thought how nice it was to feel connected to a surrogate family.

What keeps me well-balanced is the people contact I have every day with my colleagues and friends, the online and phone chats I have with my family, Tai Chi and meditation and my music – I have a stupid-sized collection and I play the guitar and sing.

I consider New Zealand to be my home. I really feel I have established roots here and have no intention of leaving and

going back to the UK. I'm in a largish New Zealand city, but the urban and rural spaces are very close, so I get the best of both worlds. One day I'm enjoying the nightlife and the next I can easily hop in my campervan and head off into the mountains for the weekend to get my fix of nature.

### Lucia Tibre

I came to New Zealand from Transylvania, a place in the north west of Romania. When I first told my husband where I'm from, he thought I was joking, believing Transylvania was just a fairy tale land.

I landed at Auckland International Airport on 13 February 2003 on a Korean Airline flight, even if now I like to say “Ko Aroha toku waka”. Good friends on Herald Island in Auckland invited me to stay for a while. I was young, single and thought that... if I want to change something in my life it would be now or never.

Auckland amazed me. It was more like a holiday resort than a metropolis, (I'm not talking here about traffic jams) with its beautiful beaches all around and very nice and very friendly, and yes, very relaxed people.

For me people are the heart of a place, and Auckland has a wonderful people perspective. I tell my friends in Romania – you don't need to travel the world, just come to Auckland and you'll find all colours, all cultures, all languages, all dances, all cuisines...

Of course I love Māori culture. My husband – William Tamakehu Davis – is Ngati Whatua. We married at Orakei Marae on 1 July 2006 in a beautiful Māori

ceremony, followed a week later, by a traditional wedding in the Orthodox Cathedral in Cluj – the capital of Transylvania.

In a couple of weeks, we are having our first child. His whenua will be buried on Ngati Whatua land, like his father's and – like me – he will be baptized in the Orthodox Church. We are, oh so thrilled, thinking of these wonderful and powerful cultures knitting together our son's identity.

Being in New Zealand has changed me. In Romania, I was a workaholic journalist. A full diary would be my mental health recipe (or a good excuse not to think about it?). Here I've been working in the mental health sector, and I feel useful – a more rewarding feeling.

Where do I call home? I've put the same question to my guests in the Romanian Radio Broadcast at Planet FM and I've received quite often the following answer: “the whole planet is my home – hopping in and out of planes, I feel a citizen of the world”.

I love this thought in which everybody is my neighbour and together we have the responsibility to keep clean and peaceful and happy our wonderful home ... for our future children with more and more mixed identities.

**To find out what's happening in and around Mental Health Awareness Week go to page 6.**

**To find out what you can do to get involved go to page 12.**

*Nikki Woolley, Ruth Jackson, Cate Hennessy*

# Does discrimination even exist for Generation Y?

**Mental health services have undergone radical changes from the large long-term institutional care facilities that existed for much of last century. Children of the eighties and nineties inhabit a world where *Like Minds, Like Mine* has been active for most of their formative years and options like community houses, home based treatment and early intervention services now exist.**

They've rarely gone through the type of institutional discrimination that adults who were admitted to institutions children and adolescents experienced:

"Most spoke of having no understanding of why they had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital....They described vivid memories of living in a regimented, punitive environment ....and of seeing and experiencing terrifying things. Many said they had been given ECT and heavy medication regimes... Some spoke of being put into seclusion, also as punishment.

A strong common thread amongst such participants was the loss of their youth and innocence. Many said they had been discharged without the skills needed to deal with adulthood, often saying that their lives had been a tremendous struggle and that their experiences had cast a shadow over their whole lives."

*Confidential Forum Report, June 2007*

We talk to three Generation Y-ers and ask – is discrimination alive and kicking in the twenty-first century?



## Jessica Senior

Meet Jess Senior (22). She is Youth Consumer Liaison Worker for WellLink Trust. She co-ordinates a Youth Governance Group that meets to discuss mental health issues for youth in the Wellington region and has experience of mental illness.

She says, "Discrimination does happen and it comes from everyone from your own family, from the community and from medical professionals to a surprisingly high degree.

"There is lot of name calling and things. When I was in my teens, whenever I got into an argument with a certain person she would be like 'Oh, go take your psycho pills, you psycho!'"

Jess does believe that young people today have different perceptions of mental illness than previous generations, "I think with older generations a lot

of them have this impression that if you've got schizophrenia or bipolar then you're doomed ...Whereas I think that people my own age have a much better understanding."

Jess' mother died by suicide when Jess was nine and Jess experienced her own suicide attempt at 14.

"I think due to the media and due to how things had gone with my mother, I thought I was doomed for life and that if I didn't die by suicide I'd end up one of those cliché people you see in bad movies shuffling around a mental institution. But no, now I feel completely confident that my life is not going to end in suicide. I have a really strong belief in recovery now."

The last ten years have seen the adoption of the recovery paradigm, with more community based care and alternatives to hospital treatment and Jess believes this new configuration of services improves young people's perceptions of mental illness, "It does make it a lot more acceptable and a lot less separated from the other aspects of health."

While some clichés of being "doomed for life" or "shuffling around institutions" might be slowly disappearing, other stereotypes intertwined with mental illness are alive and well amongst young people.

'Lease', the winning short film of this year's 48-hour film festival, features the line, "I wish my grass was emo so it would cut itself" sung by a male youth dressed in black, miserably mowing the lawn.

"Emo" is a youth subculture identified by certain type of dress – tight black clothes, wallet chains, black eyeliner, haircuts

with long sloping fringes and certain types of music like Saves the Day, Panic! At the Disco and My Chemical Romance. However, the true meaning of "emo" and whether it exists at all is hotly debated amongst young people.

It seems that nobody would refer to themselves as "emo" but the stereotype is frequently used as a putdown.

"The whole emo thing I think is quite discriminatory", says Jess, "because it really perpetuates the stereotype that self-harm is attention seeking when the vast majority of the time it's not. People go to great lengths to hide it. In maybe the very few cases where it is for attention you have to wonder. Instead of criticising someone you have to think that if they need attention so badly that they're going to physically hurt their own body they must really need something."

Jess holds high hopes for the achievements of her peers in improving the experience of other young people with mental illness.

Speaking of her work with the Youth Governance Group, she says, "I think some things we've done have helped people to realise that there is a lot of difficulty, a lot of stigma and discrimination ... I think especially young people don't realise it because the way that mental health consumers are treated is 1000% better than it used to be ...

"I think it can be really empowering to see other people who've been through tough times and they're doing well and you're like 'Hell, if they can get through that stuff then I can get through my stuff'. Young people with experience of mental illness – shock horror – can be great and care and want to make a difference."



Andrew McGregor

## Michaela Frew

Experiencing stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness has motivated Whakatane teenager, Michaela Frew, to start up a support group for Children of Parents with Mental Illness.

“The group is just starting. It’s a place to have fun, learn about discrimination with kids who are the same.”

Michaela, now 16, was five years old when her mother was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

“I didn’t even know what schizophrenia was. All it was to me was a big long word.”

At that time Michaela was not so aware of any stigma or discrimination associated with mental illness.

“I just noticed that our family wasn’t really the same as other families... we didn’t have as much money...When I was ten or eleven I used to get teased at school about my mum being ‘mental’.”

Although her friends stopped teasing her, Michaela recalls a time when she did feel shame and stigma about her mother’s mental illness. She is keen to support other young people so they do not experience this.

“My perceptions have changed for the better. They are more accepting now. That’s only because I’ve been around people with mental illness. My aunty works [in the mental health field]. She’s very open minded so she taught me to understand and if I asked a question she always knew the answer.”

## Andrew McGregor

Andrew McGregor (24) attributes his recovery to the heaps of support he received from his partner, friends and family.

“My friends ask me how I feel – they know not to offer me drugs anymore.”

Andrew is a talented guitarist and plays in two bands, as well as teaching guitar. He believes music has been very therapeutic, especially the social aspect of playing with a band.

Now living in Paramata, Wellington, and a proud father to a 4-month-old baby boy, Andrew says “I’m the happiest I’ve ever been in my life”.

His message for people with friends or family members experiencing mental illness, “Talk to them about it and don’t be judgemental.”

## What does the future hold?

It appears that discrimination is alive and kicking in the younger communities and at the Enhancing Our Com(mon)unity conference in Rotorua earlier this year, Sarah Gordon from CASE Consulting spoke about stigma and young people in her “What does ‘mental’ mean?” presentation.

She described how children become part of stigma and discrimination without knowing the meaning of stigmatising words.

However, what starts at this early age as name calling creates – for the person with experience of mental illness – a cycle where they adopt and then internalise the language that is being directed towards them.

Sarah believes this situation is one that can be addressed. She says, “Children position themselves in the world and respond to anti-discrimination messages as easily as stigmatising ones.

“They have no understanding why “mental” and cuckoo” is derogatory, so information introduced at this stage can divert negative behaviours such as name calling and ward off internalising negative attitudes about mental illness.”

Early intervention can work in tackling the issue and children and youth need to be a priority target in the project to counter stigma and discrimination.

Sarah says that by adopting an unrecognised strand – “zero tolerance of discrimination” – in the Blueprint for Mental Health Services in New Zealand: How Things Need to Be (Mental Health Commission, 1998) we can correct the script of negative attitudes towards mental illness inscribed from a very early age.

“Targeting children to educate them about mental illness will help them avoid feeding discrimination in the first place.

“Then by incorporating people with experience of mental illness into services as leaders and deliverers, this will go a way towards addressing internalised stigma through the power of contact.”

In this way, people will be equipped to address stigma and discrimination when and where it occurs.

*Ruth Jackson, Cate Hennessy*

## For support, you can call:

**Youthline** on 0800 37 66 33

**Warmline** on 0800 200 207  
(A Wellingtonian helpline run by people with experience of mental illness)

**The Youth Governance Group** – provides a youth voice to services in the Wellington region. To get involved or receive their newsletter email: [jessicas@wellink.org.nz](mailto:jessicas@wellink.org.nz)

**Vibe** is a community action network open to young adults in Auckland with experience of mental distress and a passion for positive social change. They have a social space with an emphasis on music, creativity and connecting with each other. Check them out at [www.vibecentral.org.nz](http://www.vibecentral.org.nz). If you don’t live in Auckland but would like to be included on an email list contact [vibe@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:vibe@mentalhealth.org.nz)

**Want to find out more?**  
These websites offer some great information for young people:

[www.headspace.org.nz](http://www.headspace.org.nz)  
[www.urge.org.nz](http://www.urge.org.nz)  
[www.trippin.co.nz](http://www.trippin.co.nz)

**For online peer support forums visit:**  
[www.jetmag.co.nz](http://www.jetmag.co.nz)  
[www.tearaway.co.nz](http://www.tearaway.co.nz)

# Who we are and where we stand Ko Papatūānuku tōku tūrangawaewae

## Activities and events during Mental Health Awareness Week 2007

Communities all over the country have found innovative and fun ways to express the sentiments of Awareness Week. The activities and events listed below were up to date at the time of printing. You can also check on line for any additional activities that might be available by going to: [www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz)

### Northland

#### Friday 12th October 2007

**Dargaville:** *Pōwhiri and Hakari at Te Houhanga Marae*

Free to Tangata Whaiora, hangi meal.

**Contact person:** Jacqui Whippy, Kaipara Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Northland Health, phone: (021) 701 297 or email: [jwhippy@nhl.co.nz](mailto:jwhippy@nhl.co.nz)

#### Saturday 13th October 2007

**Dargaville:** *Hīkoi through the main street of Dargaville*

**Contact person:** Jacqui Whippy, Kaipara Community Mental Health and Addiction Services, Northland Health, phone: (021) 701 297 or email: [jwhippy@nhl.co.nz](mailto:jwhippy@nhl.co.nz)

### Auckland

#### Thursday 11th October 2007

**Auckland:** *Music Gig at Galatos*

Contact person: Freedom Preston-Clark, call 09 300 7031 or email: [freedom@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:freedom@mentalhealth.org.nz)

### In and around Mental Health Awareness Week

*North Shore Community and Social Services Cultural Perspective Lunchtime Series 2007* NSCSS invites you to attend and gain insight into the life of migrants settling into New Zealand.

**Venue:** Sunnynook Community Centre, Corner Sycamore Drive and Sunnynook Road, Sunnynook, North Shore City.

**Schedule:** 9th August – Philippines; 30th August – Bulgaria; 13 September – Japan; 16th October – Pacifica; 8 November – Kenya.

**Cost:** \$5 – to book email [enas@nscss.org.nz](mailto:enas@nscss.org.nz) or call (09) 486 8420.

### Waikato/ Bay of Plenty/Coromandel

#### Monday 8th October

**Hamilton:** *Street Parade and Health Expo*

Free event, open to all. Starts at 10am from Knox Street, heading down Victoria Street to Garden Place, arriving about 10.30am.

**Contact people:** Aaron Woolley at Te Korowai Hauora O Hauraki, for Health Expo inquiries, (021) 902 434, and Jacqueline Tauranga at Progress to Health, for Parade inquiries, (027) 275 6495.

#### Tuesday 9th October 2007

**Waihi:** *Centre Open Day*

Arts and crafts. Free event, open to all. Venue: Nga Paehou Prevocational Services, Te Korowai Hauora O Hauraki, 122 Seddon Street, Waihi.

**Contact names:** Maria Julian, Jacqui Jenkins, Ali Kemp and George Pere. Phone (03) 863 3232 or email: [ngapaehou@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ngapaehou@xtra.co.nz)

#### Wednesday 10th October 2007 – ‘World Mental Health Day’

**Huntly:** *Top Town Sports and Health Day*

Free event, all welcome. The venue is Lake Hakanoa in Huntly.

**Contact people:** Aaron Woolley at Te Korowai Hauora O Hauraki, for Health Expo inquiries, (021) 902 434, and Jacqueline Tauranga at Progress to Health, for Parade inquiries, (027) 275 6495.

**Tauranga:** *Mental Health Expo and Open Day* Free event. From 9am – 2pm at the Historic Village. Extensive media coverage, supported by More FM and the Tauranga District Council. Expo attendees/stall holders need to register with Terry Heath at Turning Point Trust (Programme Coordinator) phone (07) 578 6934.

**Hamilton:** *Garden Walky, Talky and Shared Lunch*

Free. On World Mental Health Day. Meeting at Promoting Mental Wellness, located at 69 Grey Street, at 10am on the day for a cuppa and walk to, from and around the Hamilton Gardens.

**Contact person:** David Baker at Promoting Mental Wellness, phone (07) 856 4265 or (021) 126 2739 or email: [pmwellness@ihug.co.nz](mailto:pmwellness@ihug.co.nz)

#### Friday 12th October 2007

**Thames:** *Wellness Health Expo and Mad Hatters Party, & Respect Awards*

St James Union Parish Hall, Pahau Street, Thames. 10am – 1pm cost FREE. Supporting Mental Health Awareness Week 2007.

**Contact:** Aaron Woolley on (07) 868 5375 ext 124 or email [aaron@korowai.co.nz](mailto:aaron@korowai.co.nz)

### In and around Mental Health Awareness Week

**Waikato Region:** *Rangatahi (Youth) Poster Competition*

To download the flyer, go to: <http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/MHAW07-midlands-poster-competition.pdf>

### Central North Island

#### Monday 8th October 2007

**Turangi:** *Respect Award*

Turangi Awards for Respect, from midday to 1.30pm, held in the Tuwharetoa Health Services Board Room. Contact: Noeline Kuru at Tuwharetoa Health Services, 027 4911745 or email: [noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz](mailto:noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz)

#### Tuesday 9th October 2007

**Taupo:** *Respect Awards*

Taupo Awards for Respect, midday to 1.30pm, held in the Mayoral Chambers. Contact: Noeline Kuru at Tuwharetoa Health Services, 027 4911745 or email [noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz](mailto:noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz)

**Turangi:** *Mental Health Awareness Community Day*

Snacks and ladders, poster competition, music and movement. Contact: Noeline Kuru at Tuwharetoa Health Services, 027 4911745 or email [noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz](mailto:noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz)

#### Wednesday 10th October 2007 – ‘World Mental Health Day’

**Taupo:** *Mental Health Awareness Community Day*

From 10am until 2pm, stalls of services supporting mental health in our community – what they do and how they help.

**Contact:** Noeline Kuru at Tuwharetoa Health Services, 027 4911745 or email [noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz](mailto:noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz)

#### Thursday 11th October 2007

**Turangi:** *Stall at New World*

All day long at Turangi New World, includes art display, mental health education and promotion and information.

Contact: Noeline Kuru at Tuwharetoa Health Services, 027 4911745 or email [noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz](mailto:noeladvocate.recovery@xtra.co.nz)

### Wellington/Wairarapa

#### Tuesday 9th October 2007

**Palmerston North:** *Awareness Raising Day*

On the UCOL atrium and lawn. UCOL students and staff and anyone else who wants to join. Contact person: Marcia Amadio, UCOL Student Health Centre, phone (06) 952 7014 or email [c.mattinson@ucol.ac.nz](mailto:c.mattinson@ucol.ac.nz)

### In and around Mental Health Awareness Week

**Wellington:** *The Migrant Kitchen*

Learning about different cultures through food. To learn more check out this TV3 video clip: <http://www.tv3.co.nz/VideoBrowseAll/EntertainmentVideo/tabid/312/articleID/33925/Default.aspx#video>

### Nelson/Marlborough

### In and around Mental Health Awareness Week

**Picton and Blenheim:** *Library Displays during the week*

Organised by Supporting Families, call (03) 577 7868.

### Canterbury/West Coast

#### Thursday 11th October 2007

**Christchurch:** *Peer Support Options and Possibilities: A Mental Health Consumer Forum* Free. From 1pm-2.30pm at the Oxford Tce Baptist Church, cnr Oxford Tce and Madras Street. Contact: Schizophrenia Fellowship, phone (03) 348 7139 or email: [sfcanterbury@paradise.net.nz](mailto:sfcanterbury@paradise.net.nz)

### Otago/Southland

None known.

# News in brief

## New Zealand Mental Health Media Grants 2007 – inaugural recipients named

The Mental Health Foundation is pleased to announce that Halina Ogonowska-Coates (Christchurch), Jessica Le Bas (Nelson), Jo Randerson (Wellington) and Debbie Hager (Auckland) are the first four recipients of the inaugural New Zealand Mental Health Media Grants (see pages 10 and 11 for their profiles).

Forty-two applications were received overall – 12 applications in category one (media professionals) and 30 in category two (creative media projects).

“The number and quality of the applications was high,” says Judi Clements, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand. “This made the selection process a lengthy and intense one – particularly for category two.”

Ms Clements says that all the projects picked meet the goals of reducing stigma and discrimination and increasing understanding of people with experience of mental illness.

“Receiving a Grant gives recipients a chance to work through their ideas about mental health, and an opportunity to shift people’s thinking about mental illness,” says Ms Clements.

“Our congratulations to the 2007 recipients, we look forward to supporting their work and seeing their finished projects.

“Also, our thanks to the selection panels – it was a challenging job to read through all the applications and come to a collective decision.”

With the support of the Grant, the recipients will complete their projects over the next 12 months. The 2008 New Zealand Mental Health Media Grants will open for applications next March.

The selection panel for category one – media professionals – included: Dr Raymond Nairn (chair), Mike Gourley, Amanda Cropp, Jim Tully and Mary O’Hagan.

The selection panel for category two – creative media projects – included: Dr Raymond Nairn (chair), Caroline Miller, Judith White, Shona Laing and Anne Helm.

See [www.mediagrants.org.nz](http://www.mediagrants.org.nz) for more information.

## Like Minds Māori Providers’ Hui, Whakatū Marae, Nelson 17, 18, 19 October

The 2007 Māori providers’ hui is being held for the first time in Te Wai Pounamu. Hosted by Te Rapuora O te Wai Harakeke, the agenda includes highlights and challenges for Māori providers, resource development, and the new national plan and tikanga framework that the Māori Caucus has been involved in developing.

There are also some wonderful local entertainment and history activities planned for participants “free” time.

The 2007 hui follows on from 2006 hui in Wanganui, which was a great success.

For further information, please contact Katrina Mathers on [likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz) or 09 966 5723

## Like Minds Pacific Providers’ Fono, Auckland, 1–2 November

“Pacific Communities against Stigma and Discrimination” is the theme for the Pacific providers’ fono being held in Auckland.

PacifiCare is hosting the fono with day one at their offices in Mangere (for Pacific providers only) and day two at the Otara Leisure Centre. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss current issues, future plans and resources, as well as enjoying an exciting line up of presentations from community leaders at a special community event.

For further information, please contact Katrina Mathers on [likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz) or 09 966 5723

## Revamped Broadsheet for Like Minds providers

*Like Minds, Like Mine* providers who receive the monthly broadsheet will have recently noticed a change. Thanks to the efforts of Shaughan Woodcock and Katrina Mathers the broadsheet has been revamped and is available by email or on the *Like Minds* website ([www.likeminds.org.nz](http://www.likeminds.org.nz)). If you are a provider and interested in receiving or contributing to the broadsheet, then please email: [likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz)

## Updated logo

The *Like Minds* logo is currently going through a ‘refresh’ that maintains the integrity of the brand, but modernises it for the future. The updated look and feel will be introduced with the December issue of the *Like Minds* newsletter.

## National Plan

The *Like Minds, Like Mine* National Plan 2007–2013 has been signed off by Cabinet and a small launch is being planned for later in the year. The launch will be attended by Pete Hodgson, the Minister of Health (or his representative), Darryl Bishop, Programme Leader and many of the people that have been involved in the *Like Minds, Like Mine* campaign from its outset ten years ago. Please direct any enquiries about the launch to [likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz](mailto:likeminds@mentalhealth.org.nz).



Participants in the 2006 Māori Provider Hui at Pūtikī Marae coming back from an early morning paddle on the Whanganui awa. Photographer Nikki Woolley

# Celebrating Diversity – the key to mental health

The key to improving the experiences of refugees settling in New Zealand is increased political and social awareness amongst existing New Zealanders, says clinical psychologist Ranka Margetic-Sosa.

For the past ten years, Ranka has been working as Clinical Manager for Refugees as Survivors (RAS) in Wellington.

“We work with torture and trauma survivors and their mental health issues are mainly around major depression or anxiety disorders, particularly post traumatic stress disorders.”

The isolation that many refugees experience on first coming to New Zealand can be especially difficult.

Ranka recalls clients saying, “In my mind I know we are equal as a people but we are not equal because I do not have my family with me. I do not have friends. I don’t have neighbours who say hello.”

New Zealand is a kind and reasonably good society but racism and chauvinism do exist, says Ranka, sometimes even more than we acknowledge.

“Refugees are coming from different places in the world – from the Middle East, from Latin America, from Africa, from Asia, used to be from Yugoslavia and the Balkans – and those people, they know when they’ve been disrespected or when a remark is made that they’ve been dismissed as a person,” she says.

“Unfortunately when it happens that makes the internalised stigma bigger.”

Many survivors also have issues of survivor guilt. They feel shame that they survived when so many friends or family members did not. Racist or disrespectful moments feed that guilt. “It can be very hurtful”, explains Ranka.

RAS works with a variety of agencies at the Multicultural Services Centre in Wellington to ensure that their clients



Ranka Margetic-Sosa

have appropriate community support. They also provide training to a variety of other service providers in areas such as health, education and the Police.

“When working with refugees with mental illness it is important to be informed about what is going on in their country. That is how you show interest. That is how you show that they are important as a person. Maybe that will not eliminate, but contribute, to the stigma becoming smaller,” Ranka says.

She has huge respect for the *Like Minds* campaign and believes the messages promoted so far have relevance to the refugee community as well.

“Sometimes internalised stigma is so strong that people think ‘this is all society sees about me’. It’s very important and we try to help people understand that to have a mental illness is not your identity.”

## Homeira Fatthi

Homeira Fatthi credits the proud heritage of her homeland as the core thread that sustained her through some traumatic times as she established a life for herself in New Zealand.

“When we look at history it didn’t matter

what happened to Persia for thousands of years,” says Homeira. “Many countries came and occupied and tried to destroy the culture ... It’s still standing high and proud...”

Homeira moved to Auckland as a refugee from Iran in 1992. Battling homesickness and culture shock, she found herself severely depressed. Her husband experienced mental health issues which eventually culminated in his suicide.

“I was quite isolated... I basically kept it to myself,” Homeira recalls. “With all the problems that I had ... I thought it’s a family affair and hopefully we can fix it. I didn’t know that my husband was suffering from serious mental illness.”

Homeira believes this attitude can be common amongst the Iranian community in New Zealand.

“Mental illness is an illness that people prefer to ignore or keep it very private. It’s a very small community here and they are worried that people will talk and that it will spread around the community,” she says.

Religion plays a great part in some people’s lives in Iran, says Homeira, and she recounts how her mother living in Iran derives a lot of comfort from Islamic faith – “I think people’s faith and beliefs has a great part to play in how people offload their pain.”

In New Zealand, Homeira found inspiration and support from a Christian community. She was able to confide in her friends at the church, who encouraged her and supported her a lot, especially



Top: Homeira and Shahin on their wedding day with Homeira's daughter and bridesmaid, Nikita  
 Bottom: Homeira's friends gifted seven items which symbolise life-rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience and beauty

after the death of her first husband.

Homeira noticed that she was not getting better after the death of her husband. She started taking antidepressant medication and attending counselling, "I was determined to face the things that I had hidden and run away from for a long, long time for my sake and for my children's sake," she says.

Homeira put all her effort into recovery, working hard to qualify as an interpreter, volunteering to help people and drawing inspiration from the natural environment surrounding Auckland.

"I walk and hear the sound of the trees when the wind is blowing through them and the smell of the ocean and the sound of the waves. It re-energises me. I can walk for hours and it helps me tremendously," Homeira says.

In March this year, in a ceremony weaving together their Iranian heritage and Kiwi culture, Homeira married an Iranian man who is also a refugee to New Zealand.

The wedding day was chosen for its auspicious date as the Iranian New Year. Around 100 guests gathered – friends, neighbours, business associates, church members, as well as visitors from Japan and a few cities around New Zealand. The pastor of Homeira's Christian church conducted the ceremony in a garden overlooking Manukau Harbour. Vows were exchanged in English and Parsi (Homeira's first language).

As part of the ceremony, friends placed seven items (apple, egg, wheat, coins, herbs, goldfish, vinegar) along with a lit candle and a mirror on a specially prepared table. These items are associated with the New Year celebrations in Persian culture and symbolise life-rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience, and beauty.

During the speeches, guests thanked Homeira and her new husband for all they had brought to the community – their generosity, entrepreneurial drive, rich cultural identity, determination through tough times and infectious sense of fun.

Homeira continues to work as an interpreter, mainly contracted by local hospitals, as she studies for a Bachelor of Social Practice at Unitec in Auckland. She is passionate about issues of social justice and campaigns for the rights of Iranian refugees who are imprisoned while attempting to prove their refugee status. She also runs a foundation called Hope and Peace Foundation, which assists anyone from any nationality to have a better life.

Homeira says, "I'm a Kiwi and I'm proud of that, but I'll never forget where I came from...it is like Nikita – my daughter – says to people 'I'm a Kiwi, I was born in New Zealand but I'm Persian'. It's a beautiful thing to say. She is only 14 years old and it makes me so proud for someone who's born here, to have such a strong feeling for Persia [Iran]...."

*Ruth Jackson*

**For more information, help or advice, please contact:**

**Auckland Refugees As Survivors**

Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre  
 251 Massey Road, Mangere, Auckland  
 P.O. Box 22 – 315, Otahuhu, Auckland  
 Phone: (09) 270 0870  
 Fax: (09) 270 0056  
 Email: admin@aucklandras.org.nz  
 Web: www.aucklandras.org.nz

This website features a Refugee Services Directory which lists available services in Auckland.

**Wellington Refugees As Survivors**

Multicultural Services Centre  
 5th Floor, 61-63 Taranaki St, Wellington  
 Phone: (04) 384 7279  
 Fax: (04) 384 6292  
 Email: wnras@xtra.co.nz  
 Web: www.wellington-ras.org.nz

This service is based in the Wellington Multicultural Services Centre, which houses a range of initiatives to serve the needs of Refugees and Migrants.

**Christchurch Resettlement Services**

201 Peterborough Street  
 PO Box 13 839  
 Christchurch  
 Phone: (03) 377 0292  
 Provides counselling, qualified social workers, bi-lingual community workers and interpreters. Contact Shirley Wright, Senior Social Worker for referrals. Self-referrals welcome.

# Introducing the Mental Health Media Grants 2007 recipients



**Jessica Le Bas**

**Recipient in category two: creative media projects**

**Project:** A collection of poetry

**Media:** A book

For Jessica Le Bas, as with all writers, words are more than abstract markings on a page. They are infused with meaning, layer upon layer, which seek to find a way of connecting the readers with the experience.

Jessica, an already published poet, had wanted to work on a project that dealt with mental health issues in adolescence for some time.

She was drawn to her project from a deeply personal level.

“Over the last four years one of my children has faced considerable challenges with mental health,” she says.

“Our extended family too have struggled to come to terms with the diversity and the largely unknown dynamics of mental illness, that can suddenly take over the life of your loved one.”

“It has occurred to me on many occasions, that my own child's strength, resilience and suffering [and the care that others have given her] should gain more recognition, empathy and respectability than it does – as should all who face similar challenges.”

Jessica hopes that her collection will form a narrative providing insight and understanding into the journey a family and young person can take when their mental health is compromised by illness.

“The challenge will be to keep the narrative from being overly anecdotal and sentimental,” she says. “It needs to be accessible and honest and still make an impression on the reader's perception of mental illness.

“I'm really excited about the opportunity to publish a collection of poetry that contributes to legitimising the nature of mental well-being as part of what it is to be human.

“I want people to ‘see and feel’ the levels of trauma, care and resilience, that adolescents and their families face and to break down some misconceptions.”

Jessica lives in Nelson. Her favourite “getaway” place is home – “in the back garden, with the hens, the roses and the big plum trees.”



**Debbie Hager**

**Recipient in category two: creative media projects**

**Project:** Women and children who are denied access to domestic violence services because of mental illness and substance abuse problems

**Media:** A teaching documentary

How do you make the individual experiences of domestic violence 'real' to those people who need to provide them with support services?

This is one of the challenges facing Debbie Hager – passionate about the special group of women in our community who experience mental illness or abuse substances because of domestic violence.

“It is a huge yet silent issue,” says Debbie, “only those living through this experience, or those like me who have researched it, know much about the plight of these women – yet it is a significant mental health problem.”

She's chosen to tackle the issue in a teaching documentary with dramatised stories that will connect people with real-life situations.

“Seeing situations dramatised will, we hope, make them much more real and less academic,” she says.

The documentary will be targeted towards NGO and statutory agencies and Debbie says one of the biggest challenges of the project is its complexity.

“There is no one generic viewpoint or situation. Whilst women's experiences may be similar, their responses will be different and they ask for help from a wide range of agencies.

“If we portray a lawyer, will WINZ and the police think that they have nothing to learn?”

Despite these challenges Debbie is looking forward to seeing the script bring women's experiences to life in a way that develops understanding and makes it real.

She says, “I have to work with other women's voices – this is not my own experience – so I have to honour those voices – and work with the others to turn their ideas into a realistic, hard hitting, concise teaching process.”

Debbie's ultimate aim is to have the documentary used widely as a resource to begin to raise awareness of these women's plight and to change behaviour in agencies.

“There is still nowhere for these women to go to get help and treatment.

“By exposing people to this resource we're hoping to open their eyes to a situation that they have been ignoring or misinterpreting – and then asking them to change their strategies in response to that new awareness.

“It would be wonderful if at least agencies could learn how to hear what they're saying and respond in ways which begin to build trust and help women move towards wellness.

“I think we're setting ourselves a big, complex problem!”

Debbie lives in Titirangi, Auckland with her “very practical” sculptor/painter partner and a Waimarana dog called Pipi. She relaxes in her garden, in the bush, at the beach and by tramping and swimming – “anywhere that there's water to swim in!”



COURTESY: DOMINION POST

## Jo Randerson

### Recipient in category two: creative media projects

**Project:** An art exhibition

**Media:** Public art galleries

Jo Randerson believes that life is more complicated and simpler than it appears.

She's part of a small tribe of artists who "live partially in other worlds and seek opportunities to develop thought and expression as individuals within a diverse community – where all parts are valued as creating the whole".

Jo found inspiration for her exhibition while she was in Belgium last year.

"I spent a lot of time at the Guislan Museum in Gent, which features a fantastic array of work by artists in alternative mental states," she says.

"I really love the energy, direct communication and complete individuality that comes through this type of work - no-one else creates anything like it."

Jo says she's always been interested in mental health and wanted to bring this experience to a New Zealand audience by getting local artists involved.

"So I'm producing an exhibition of artwork by artists who each have their own personal experiences of mental illness to draw from.

"Alongside each creative endeavour, will be quotes and background information about the artist – including a video interview.

"I've planned the launch of the exhibition in Wellington with the possibility of taking it on tour around New Zealand.

"I want people to see how strong this work is, how well-authored and striking. It is a voice that needs to be represented more in New Zealand."

Jo has designed exhibitions before and has herself created work for them. She is producing this exhibition with support from Arts Access Aotearoa and local artists Stuart Shepherd and Sarah Jane Parton.

She's looking forward to talking to all the artists in her exhibition about their work and how they 'see' it.

"I've always been fascinated about the creative process and listening to how others [especially the artists] describe it."

Jo hopes that people will be invigorated by the sight of such lively, energetic and unique work – work that springs directly from the artists' experience of life and the world, with no or little concern for what is fashionable.

"I also hope audiences will think about alternative mental states as being on a continuum and not regard people as being 'either mentally ill or not'.

"We are a diverse society full of many wonderful and unique characters, and our communities work well when we embrace our differences and don't separate each other into binary groups."

Jo's favourite place for relaxing and unwinding is in the ocean or out on a windy hillside. She lives in Vogelmorn, Wellington.



## Halina Ogonowska-Coates

### Recipient in category one: media professionals

**Project:** A radio documentary

**Media:** Radio New Zealand

Halina Ogonowska-Coates says that asking questions is in her blood – her father Ken is also a journalist and has been all his working life.

"Like my Dad I'm committed to working in the media field – with a focus on social issues and a deep interest in mental health," says Halina.

"I've worked on several mental health media projects and I have some understanding of what still needs to be done to reduce stigma and discrimination against people with experience of mental illness."

Halina saw the Media Grants as an opportunity to delve into a mental health project that would utilise her media skills.

"I'll be recording people's experience of mental illness to build up a media file of personal stories that [with the full permission of the participants] can be drawn on at short notice," she says.

"Often the tight deadlines journalists have mean that people are not available to talk in depth about their experiences and that leads to depictions of old stereotypes. This would mean that there would be an available file of pre-recorded stories for media to access.

"But we would need to ensure that there are guidelines and safeguards around the release of the material [which would be copyrighted to the individual storytellers].

"Having this collection to draw on is also an opportunity to generate a wider understanding in our communities of the actual experience of mental illness."

Halina can see plenty of challenges ahead, especially in growing her own understanding of people's experience with mental illness. She says that taking the time to listen and knowing that it will be the participants that are really driving the project is key to its success.

Not a person to procrastinate, she has already begun work on the project, talking with people who might be interested in taking part.

She's looking forward to creating a living resource, an archive that can be updated every two to three years and, through its record of personal stories, reflect the ongoing changes and awareness in stigma and discrimination.

"Radio New Zealand have already confirmed they are interested in me producing a radio documentary about people's personal journeys."

Halina lives in Sumner, Christchurch with her husband and is a passionate South Islander. Her Polish heritage through her mother Irena, has contributed to her interest and commitment to people's stories. Her favourite place to unwind and relax is at home where she walks on the beach, reads in bed, listens to music and practises Iyengar yoga.

"I also love going to Rakiura, Stewart Island where we have a crib. The birds, the bush, the sea, the weather and the people are amazing down there."

*Cate Hennessy*

# Who we are and where we stand

## Ko Papatūānuku tōku tūrangawaewae

### How you can get involved

Think about the ways you can celebrate the diversity of people living in your community and put your ideas into action. Here are a few suggestions for connecting to and understanding your local community and how you might be part of it.

**Connecting to the land:** Get in touch with the land by looking in your local library, visiting the Department of Conservation (DOC [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)) or your City, District or Regional Council office to find out where the parks, walks and campsites are in your region. Through DOC and your local councils you can also assist with re-vegetation projects.

Community gardens are excellent places to learn about growing food, composting and worm farms and are also somewhere to meet and work alongside your neighbours. For further information visit: [www.sustaintrust.org.nz](http://www.sustaintrust.org.nz)

**Connecting to people:** Visit libraries and other community facilities and learn something new about the history, population and tangata whenua of the

area in which you live. Learn about Māori place names from the Māori Language Commission, [www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz](http://www.tetaurawhiri.govt.nz) and find out where your local marae is and contact them to learn more about the indigenous history of your region.

**Connecting to your community:** Find out about the many ethnicities in New Zealand and in your local area by contacting the Office for Ethnic Affairs ([www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz](http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz)). You can also learn more about refugee resettlement at [www.rms.org.nz](http://www.rms.org.nz).

Take time to read your local newspaper or newsletter and find out what's going on in your town or neighbourhood. Get involved in local activities by joining a community group (like Rotary or Toastmasters), participating in a local sports team or by attending local events.

In a healthy society we'd see the social inclusion of people with experience of mental illness as well as a culture of celebrating diversity.

For more ideas check out the Mental Health Awareness Week activities lists at [www.mentalhealth.org.nz](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz) by looking in the online toolkit.

### The meaning of 'home'

Proverbs from other cultures also describe the fundamental importance of home – the people and the land – and how the past can give us guidance for the future.

- Cuimhnichibh air na daoine bho'n d'thainig sibh  
*Remember the people whom you come from.* (Gaelic)
- A family is like a forest, when you are outside it is dense, when you are inside you see that each tree has its place. (Ghana, Akan)
- If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people. (China)
- Kolik řečí znáš, tolikrát jsi člověkem. *You are so many times a human how many languages you know.* (Czech)
- O le tagata ma lona faasinomaga  
Each person has a heritage, hence a direction. (Samoa)



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LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE  
Whakaitia te Whakawhiu i te Tangata

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