



LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE
Whakaitia te Whakawhiu i te Tangata



COUNTERING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

DISCRIMINATION

what you do makes the difference

Discrimination is one of the biggest barriers to recovery. That is why stopping discrimination and championing respect, rights and equality for people with experience of mental illness is so important. It is as important as providing the best therapies or treatment.

Creating public awareness

The 1996 Mason inquiry found that stigma and discrimination were barriers to recovery from the experience of mental illness

and recommended a public awareness campaign to encourage New Zealanders to re-think their attitudes and responses to people with experience of mental illness.

"We support a public awareness campaign – it is a must. It is fundamentally wrong that a vulnerable group in our society should be continually subjected to the comments and actions of those who possess an outcast mentality...We are optimistic enough to believe that a well-informed New Zealand public will then realise that [people with experience of mental illness] are people whom we should nurture and value". (Mason 1996)

The Like Minds, Like Mine programme is a comprehensive health promotion strategy involving community activities, educational work, policy development and a mass media advertising campaign aimed at breaking down the stereotypes attached to people with experience of mental illness.



CELEBRATING
10 YEARS
OF LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE



“When I was first diagnosed with a mental illness I had a stigma, I didn’t want to be – labelled... I guess sometimes it was hard because I didn’t want to know, or go outside, I just wanted to stay inside where I felt a little bit of safety. They [friends] really gave me a lift when I was down. Get out there, you know, take on life”.

Aubrey, Like Minds, Like Mine television campaign

Effective social change takes time

Our personal attitudes and behaviours influence the attitudes and behaviours of others.

We all have a role in creating communities and health services that support recovery and social inclusion and reduce discrimination.

“We cannot change other people but we can help them to change if they want to... The best way to learn how to change is to watch others, to be shown not told. The best conditions for personal change are incentives, realistic goals, support and rewards... Change is a process, not an event.” (Mental Health Commission 1998)

How we can reduce our potential to discriminate

Most discriminatory behaviour has become such an unquestioned part of our daily lives that we don’t even recognise it as discriminatory.

In our own lives there are many simple ways we can help to reduce discrimination towards people with experience of mental illness. These include:

- Getting to know people before you judge them.
- Offering the same support to people when they are unwell whether they have a physical or mental health problem.
- Learning more about mental health.
- Making reasonable arrangements for employees including those with experience of mental illness.
- Using positive language to describe people with experience of mental illness and not perpetuating stereotypes.
- Including people with experience of mental illness in all areas of community life.
- Not assuming you know how people with experience of mental illness are going to act.
- Valuing and respecting people’s decisions about their own wellbeing.

Mason, K. (1996). *Inquiry under Section 47 of the Health and Disability Services Act 1993 in Respect of Certain Mental Health Services: Report of the Ministerial Inquiry to the Minister of Health*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

Mental Health Commission. (1998). *A Travel Guide for People on the Journeys Towards Equality Respect and Rights for People who Experience Mental Illness*. Wellington: Mental Health Commission.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

This resource was produced by the Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand on behalf of the Ministry of Health’s Like Minds, Like Mine programme.

For more information on countering stigma and discrimination, or the Like Minds, Like Mine programme, visit – www.likeminds.org.nz

For information about mental health and mental illness:

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTRE

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Website: www.mentalhealth.org.nz

OR

THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION

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Website: www.mhc.govt.nz

Local Like Minds, Like Mine contact details:



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