

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FUND - DEFINITIONS

COMMUNITY ACTION

Community action is defined as collective action taken by a community to address, or take steps toward addressing, a community issue in ways that benefit the community and achieve the intended outcome.

Community action occurs when a person or a group of people decide they are not happy about a situation in their community and organise themselves and others to do something about it. The kinds of concerns that often arise for communities in relation to Like Minds, Like Mine are to do with reducing stigma and discrimination for people with experience of mental illness and promoting more inclusive attitudes, behaviour and structures in New Zealand's social environment. Sometimes it may not be a specific problem that spurs a community to action but an opportunity to build on activity that is already happening.

Communities can make a difference in reducing stigma and discrimination for people with experience of mental illness, especially if they set up strong coalitions of people who are prepared to work together to make a change. Community action enables communities to self-determine their wellbeing by creating and sustaining change, within the context of their own knowledge, resources and priorities while enabling the development of new strategies to respond to change.

Principles of Community Action

The principles of community action include:

- **quality relationships** - establish and maintain meaningful and trusting relationships and partnerships with communities, which respect the 'mana' of each community
- **community innovation** - encourage communities to be innovative and creative in the actions they take to increase social inclusion and reduce barriers for people with experience of mental illness
- **shared outcomes** - work with communities toward shared outcomes and mutual goals that meet the community's needs
- **diverse communities** - acknowledge that what may work in one community may not work as well in another. Community action approaches need to meet the level of readiness and the unique needs of each community.

The Health Promotion Agency (HPA) has developed the Like Minds, Like Mine Community Partnership Fund to enable communities to take action to develop innovative projects that increase social inclusion and reduce stigma and discrimination. Projects will focus on workplace and

community settings where exclusion occurs. HPA acknowledges that communities can make things happen and it is important that they are appropriately engaged and supported to do so.

The [Like Minds, Like Mine National Plan 2014-2019](#) provides the guiding principles for the Like Minds, Like Mine programme and ensures that there is a strong, shared purpose to the outcomes of the programme, including multi-level approaches of which the Community Partnership Fund is just one. Other approaches include advertising and media campaigns, research and evaluation, media monitoring and working with employers in local communities.

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is a form of prejudice. A person experiencing discrimination is treated unfavourably compared to other people. The consequence of discrimination is that it prevents people from taking part in the opportunities and privileges of daily life available to others. Discrimination may be present in traditions, policies, ideas, practices and laws. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes mental illness. Its guiding principles are to promote autonomy, non-discrimination, full participation in society, and equality of opportunity. Unlawful discrimination relates to discrimination on the grounds and areas specified in the Human Rights Act 1993.

EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

The term 'experience of mental illness' covers all people who have a mental illness and have recovered or are managing their symptoms, are currently experiencing a mental illness, or may have a relapsing condition where future episodes of mental illness may occur.

A mental illness is at least as disabling as a physical illness and the combination of the two can be extremely disabling. In the overall New Zealand population, 46% of people are predicted to have a mental illness at some time in their lives. The number of people found to experience mental illness is higher for people who are disadvantaged in terms of household income or access to education.

In the overall population, 8% of people report difficulty performing a role because of mental illness. Mental illness can have a substantial impact on a person's mobility, communication, understanding, self care, household or work activities and social participation.

People with chronic physical conditions generally experience a higher rate of mental illness. Experiencing both mental illness and physical disability at the same time more than doubles the overall disability associated with mental illness.

INNOVATION

The term 'innovation' means new creative design and activity that is responsive to the context and cultures it is delivered in. Innovative projects ideally empower self-determination within communities to create a best-fit for the community's needs. Innovative projects ideally capture best practices and help to accelerate the development of those practices or deliver them on a larger scale.

POWER OF CONTACT PRINCIPLES

Power of contact is the effect of face-to-face contact between people with experience of mental illness and people who exclude in a structured process and context that creates the conditions to reduce stigma and discrimination.

Like Minds, Like Mine will use social change initiatives that have been shown to be effective internationally and are promising practices for the New Zealand context. Educational and contact-based strategies are promising and effective for sustained knowledge gain and positive attitude change.

Research suggests that contact between the general public and people with experience of mental illness is an effective method of reducing stigma. However, contact is only effective when five core conditions are present including:

- equal status
- opportunities to get to know each other
- information that challenges negative stereotypes
- active participation
- pursuit of a mutual goal.

Additionally, there must be multiple contacts in order to maintain the attitude and behaviour change.¹

Community-based efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination are likely to be more successful if they use a bottom-up rather than top-down approach.²

All projects must use the power of contact theory in programme activity.

REFERENCES – OTHER

Please also refer to:

Jane, D. (2012). *Best Practice Guidelines: For delivering education and training to counter stigma and discrimination associated with mental distress*. Wellington: Kites Trust. This publication has a comprehensive list of relevant recommended reading and resources.

Kites Trust. (2005). *The Power of Contact*. A literature review of different initiatives aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination, with a particular focus on education and training.

Planning tool – access through the Making a Difference funding process:
socialchangetoolkit.org.nz/

¹ Kites, 2005. *The Power of Contact*

² Stuart, H., Sartorius, N., & Arboleda-Florez, J. 2012. *Paradigms Lost: Fighting Stigma and the Lessons Learned*. Oxford University Press.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion is the process by which individuals or entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources eg, housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation and due process, that are normally available to members of society and that are key to social integration. Anyone who deviates in any perceived way from the norm of a population may become subject to coarse or subtle forms of social exclusion.

The outcome of social exclusion is that affected individuals or communities are prevented from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live. Material deprivation is the most common result of social exclusion. Material deprivation causes poverty, emotional and psychological trauma which may result in catastrophic damage to lives, health, and psyche.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion, the opposite of social exclusion, is positive action to change the circumstances and habits that lead to (or have led to) social exclusion. Social inclusion is the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people disadvantaged on any basis, to take part in society.

SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

The social model of disability describes disability as a process that happens when one group of people creates barriers to equal participation by designing a world only for their way of being. Discrimination against people with disability is created by society, not by the individuals with disabilities who encounter barriers to participation.

Like Minds, Like Mine is founded on a social model of disability and an associated human rights perspective. The social model of disability, when applied to Like Minds, Like Mine, proposes that discrimination against people with mental illness is created by society, not by individuals with mental illness who encounter barriers to participation.

A human rights approach asserts the dignity and value of all people and the right to be free of discrimination. The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities³ has been ratified by New Zealand. The Convention protects the civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights of people with disabilities including mental illness. Its guiding principles include autonomy, non-discrimination, full participation in society and equality of opportunity.

STIGMA

Stigma is an attitude that shames, disgraces or disapproves of a person in unfair and negative ways that devalue that person. People with mental illness face an alarming range of human rights abuses in countries throughout the world, yet there are evidence-based methods of reducing stigma and discrimination.

³ United Nations. 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. New York: UN General Assembly.

Misunderstanding and stigma surrounding mental illness are widespread. Despite the existence of effective treatments for mental illness, there is a belief that mental illnesses are untreatable or that people with mental illness are difficult, not intelligent, and incapable of making decisions. This stigma can lead to abuse, rejection and isolation and exclude people from health care or support. For more information about stigma and mental illness, refer to the World Health Organization who.int/topics/mental_disorders/en.

As a result of experiencing stigma, people with mental illness may develop self-stigma. A person who develops self-stigma thinks about him or herself in the same negative ways that others may have treated them originally, which results in that person feeling rejected and excluded from society.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Systemic advocacy focuses on removing barriers to full participation and may be directed at a wide range of organisations that cause disadvantage to people with experience of mental illness. Strategies may include addressing policies or processes to ensure non-discriminatory practices.