

Service User-Led Police Education Programme

We are pleased to introduce the new breakthrough education and research programmes focused on ending discrimination and promoting recovery, inclusion and respect for the human rights of people who experience mental distress, led and delivered by experts with personal lived experience.

We live in a world where we are treated differently - disabled by prejudice, discrimination and social exclusion in response to our experiences of mental distress. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to creating a different world - one where our experiences of mental distress are recognised and respected as an element of natural human difference and diversity, and are NO barrier to us being able to experience recovery, inclusion, and to exercise our human rights on an equal basis with all others: a World of Difference that will make the World of Difference to those of us who experience mental distress.

These programmes involve us working with two groups: the Police and Healthcare providers. This is the first of what will be quarterly newsletters detailing our work with the Police. If you are also interested in our work with Healthcare providers please get in touch to receive the equivalent newsletters pertaining to that programme.

Since 2014 the University of Otago Wellington and Kites have worked with the New Zealand Police to develop, deliver and evaluate service user-led education in the form of eLearning modules for staff generally and face-to-face workshops for recruits, with the aim being to counter stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination and effect behavioural change in the way Police recognise, engage and respond to people experiencing mental distress. Evaluation of the eLearning identified favourable changes in both attitudes and behaviour reported, principally in relation to recognising and engaging with people who experience mental distress. More specifically, the changes reported suggest that Police staff are recognising and engaging in a way that can be generally described as more understanding, communicative, respectful, and compassionate.

With the support of funding from the Health Promotion Agency as part of Like Minds, Like Mine, the University of Otago Wellington together with Kites, as a programme partner, are continuing to develop, deliver and evaluate the eLearning modules and the face-to-face workshops for recruits; and further extending the education programme. More specifically that extension involves: the development, delivery and evaluation of (i) tailored face-to training for communications staff (workshops delivered to approx. 600 staff in 2019); and (ii) advanced mental health training (workshops delivered to approx. 120 staff in 2020) for self-selected groups of Police staff at the District level.

Next newsletter: Meet the **World of Difference** Police Education Team. In the meantime, contact Jeremy Tumoana jeremy.tumoana@otago.ac.nz if you would like to be included on the mailing list to receive these newsletters directly; or Dr Sarah Gordon (Programme Lead) sarah.gordon@otago.ac.nz if you would like further information about the programme.