



In this issue;

- **View from the top p2**
- **Happiness Project p3**
- **Notes From The Road p3**
- **Library News p3**
- **Deep Relaxation p4**
- **Members Meetings P5**
- **A.G.M. 11th April p5**
- **Schedule for 2014 p6**

Hello everyone,
It's hard to believe that Christmas was nearly a quarter of a year ago. Autumn gales are lashing the country already, and winters short days are just around the corner. It is time to think about how we might care for ourselves, our families and our friends; time to find ways to keep contact with each other while keeping warm and dry. A cheerful text message from a friend can mean the world to someone who is feeling a little out of sorts. A phone call out of the blue just to say "hi", or a card to mark a special occasion, can lift the spirits of both parties. These small acts are part of how we support and nourish each other; how we remain part of a larger whanau and give us a reason to smile when we look in the mirror. So don't forget to say and do the little things that make a difference and bring a little warmth to someones' winter.

View from the Top

Written by Robert Coats, Manager,
Arataki Ministries

Hi everyone.

Thanks to Graham and Richard for the privilege of contributing to this newsletter. But what do I have to say?

Thinks.....mmmm???. What “top” do I look out from?

Here are some random ideas:

From the top of the Brynderwyn Hills: I love the view from the top of the Brynderwyn Hills driving back to Whangarei from south. It makes me feel that I am home, back where I belong, where everything is familiar and nice.

From the top of Arataki (in my role as Manager)? Maybe people perceive that I look from the top of the agency. But, I don't see myself at the top – rather, I see myself at the bottom striving to make it possible for everyone in the Arataki team to operate at “the top” of their abilities?

From the top looking over the Consumer Network team, I see real value in the collaboration we have with TTTWON. We seek to create a place, a programme, a network, a union which is well informed by the needs and desires of people with their own real experiences of mental illness and addictions. This info is vital to better inform services and to advocate for change.

Therefore, roll up and become members of TTTWON and make a difference by having your voice heard.

From the top – what did Sir Ed Hillary see? Like Sir Edmond Hillary, when he climbed his first mountain and stood on the top he saw multiple other peaks which were higher and needed to be climbed. He realised that he could not stop in comfort with just one hill under his belt. He determinedly set out to be better, do more, work harder, gain skills, and face obstacles with determination and strength. Consequently, just 9 years after he climbed his first mountain, he “knocked the bastard off” when he and Tensing Norgay were the first to climb Mt Everest.



When “Life” is like a spinning top? When I feel that life is in a spin; when I am on the merry-go-round and I want it to stop, how do I maintain my equilibrium? My lovely wife would say I go quiet. She can tell I am pre-occupied with thoughts going around in my head. My brain won't stop; I spin scenarios and conversations around in my head; my thoughts are repetitive. To get control there are a number of things I do – such as:

- get up in the night and write down my thoughts – to unclutter my brain and help me get to sleep;
- sit quietly and read a novel - this stops the repetitive thoughts;
- sleep in on the weekend and just let the pressures of life go by for a day;
- talk with my wife, outlining the issues and options. She brings a new perspectives, and a burden shared is a burden halved;
- go for a sail to distract my brain onto solving the immediate need to balance the forces of nature so that I don't get wet!

Bottom line: I must not let it go too long before I find a way “to get off the spinning top”.

My conclusion? There are always some places where we can “see from the top”. Sometimes we are there by choice. Sometimes our roles put us there and we need to decide how we will react to that. Sometime we need the help of others to “get on top of things”. Sometime times we may need to just plain accept that life is messy and we are not always in control (on top of things!) Therefore, we need to control what we can and accept the things we can't. In our minds we are not prisoners and we have choices. Let us exercise those to benefit others and to help ourselves.

Go well out there. Stay “on the top”.

Happiness Project

Would you like to join us in our happiness project?

It involves taking a photo everyday of something that makes you happy, brings you joy, or that you are grateful for. The project will last several months and there will be an opportunity to make your photos up into a book or some other creative form. We are hoping to present some of our images in Mental Health Awareness Week. If people are interested we may be able to meet regularly and share how we are doing and get our images onto the computer.

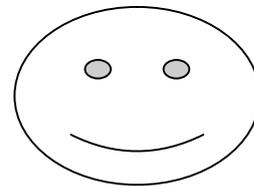
We will have some digital cameras/phones available to use for those that want to take part but haven't got one. There will be technical help for those that need it.

The goals of this project are to help people focus on the positive things in life rather than dwelling on negative thoughts. The books will provide a personalised resource that you can look back on when you are struggling and be reminded of

things that have brought you happiness in your daily life. We may even be able to publish a joint collection of photos so that there is a book out there for people interested in knowing what makes people happy.

If this sounds like something you would like to take part in **please text Denise on 0211823926** and leave a message or **leave your contact details** with Graham, Richard or Kirsten at TTTWON **09 438 4115**, and Denise will get back to you

The first meeting for those interested in being a part of this heart-warming project will be at TTTWONS premises, 73 Water St, on 1st April, from 10.30-12.30 and every Tuesday after that



Notes From The Road

Maintaining connections with TTTWON members in the more rural areas continues to have its challenges. Graham tries to make it to Dargaville on Monday afternoons. The group of service users who used to meet at Huia Cottage now gather at the home of Liz Piripi for social contact, peer support and of course a tasty home cooked meal prepared by Liz. Being able to meet with up to a dozen people in this way has enabled the Network to stay informed of the needs and requirements of service users in the Kaipara district.

Kaitaia sees more of the Networkers than it used to – we are making an effort to have more contact with TTTWON members in the far north. Holding the focus forums as well as more regular members meetings has meant that we are able to get more regular feedback and be a little more hands on than we have been in the past. We are also travelling to Kaitaia every fortnight to facilitate the AoD Peer Support group and this has meant that we can be more proactive in responding to peoples requests.

Kaikohe too is seeing more of us this year. Graham has been able to travel to Kaikohe with Kirsten every fortnight and has been able to use her Consumer Education workshops as a platform to network with users of Northpoint's services and with the Northpoint staff. Two of our members from Kaikohe also travel to Kaitaia for the Friday night peer support group. One thing that has come out of these trips is that Toby Adams has organised a team to participate in the Sports Day in Kaikohe on March 26th.

Library News

The TTTWON Library has benefited from the inclusion of some new books covering topics in the mental health field. Along with this the books have been catalogued, labelled and an alphabetical list printed of everything except the fiction. Now, when we go to areas outside of Whangarei, we can take a list of books with us. Members can request books from the list and we will endeavour to bring the books with us next time. We will collect the books on the following visit. This system is already in use, looks as though it will work well and will considerably expand the scope of our library service. There are many books of interest on the list – self help, inspirational, educational and more. ASK TO SEE THE LIST.

Deep Relaxation

Mindfulness, for stress relief.

Mindfulness is the ability to remain aware of how you feel right now, your “moment to moment experience” both internal and external. Thinking about the past, blaming and judging yourself or worrying about the future can often lead to a degree of stress that is overwhelming. But by staying calm and focused in the present moment, you can bring your nervous system back into balance. Mindfulness can be applied to activities such as walking, exercising, eating or meditation.

Meditations that cultivate mindfulness have long been used to reduce overwhelming stress. Some of these meditations bring you into the present by focusing your attention on a single repetitive action such as your breathing, a few repeated words, or a flickering light from a candle or guided imagery. Other forms of mindfulness meditation encourage you to follow and then release internal thoughts or sensations.

The practice of mindfulness meditation. Here are a few key points.

A quiet environment: Choose a secluded place in your home, office or garden, a place of worship or the great outdoors where you can relax without interruption or distractions.

A comfortable position: Get comfortable. For guided meditation, laying down can be a good option but if you are outdoors or in a semi-public place then sitting either in a



chair or on the ground with your back straight.

A point of Focus: This point can be internal – like the safe place you have created within with your deep relaxation exercises. Or something external – maybe a candle or meaningful word or sound that you repeat throughout your session. You may meditate with your eyes open or closed.

An observant noncritical attitude: Don't worry about distracting thoughts that go through your mind or about how well you are doing. If thoughts intrude during your relaxation session, don't fight them, instead gently turn your attention back to your point of focus.

Attending a guided Relaxation/ Meditation course. At TTTWON every Wednesday night from 5pm to 6pm we have a free guided relaxation course for anyone who wishes to attend. Contact Graham or Richard to find out more about this course.

Feed back: Members Meeting 14th March, Whangarei

On Friday the 14th of March there was a members meeting held at TTTWONs rooms in Water St. The networkers had publicised this in advance and it showed because there were over 40 people in attendance. A big “thank you” to all the support people, both paid and unpaid, who enabled many of our members to get to the meeting. It was also gratifying to see the numbers of people living in the wider community who took the time and made the effort to be there.

Denise Calteau spoke about the soon to be launched Happiness Project (see article on page 3. This is a venture designed to raise our awareness of the positive things that we have in our lives – things that make us happy. The idea is to form a permanent record of these things for future reference. We look forward to this project and the benefits it will bring to peoples well being.

Brian Vickers the Consumer Advisor spoke briefly about a new initiative by the Health and Disability Commission. Their vision is to have ‘consumers at the centre of services’ and they would like to trial the collection of ‘real time feedback’ to inform the DHB about patient experience. At present, they are looking for service users to provide feedback on what questions could be asked to support a consumer and family centred health system. The Consumer Advisor team would like to be able to phone you during the week beginning the 24th March to gather your thoughts and reactions. If you would like to give feedback then please phone Brian Vickers 09 4304101 ext 3533 mob 021 445 330, or email brian.vickers@northlanddhb.org.nz for further information or to take part in the survey.

Other items on the agenda included a roundup of the activities that are held at Water St – the Consumer Education Workshops; The Network Band; the Low Impact Exercise Group; Deep Relaxation; Singing Group; and the Friday Forum. These groups, although not directly run by the networkers, provide good opportunities for networking while at the same time having positive impacts on the lives of those who take part.

The announcement was made that the **Annual General Meeting of TTTWON** is to be held on 11th April. Elections for the Board of TTTWON will be held and members were encouraged to think about who might best represent them over the next year. TTTWONs board acts as an advisory group to Arataki Ministries with regard to consumer input into the Consumer Network.

Lunch was, as usual, delicious, healthy, and homemade. Many thanks to Helen Ware who prepared it all and presented it to the meeting with style. People showed their appreciation in the usual manner, despatching it all in short order.

Finally, I would like to say that I was thrilled with the way everybody pitched in and cleaned up after the meeting – dishes done, place swept, rubbish collected! That is you, the members, taking ownership of your place and your meeting. Many thanks from us networkers for that mahi. It made the end of our day effortless and satisfying. A good meeting.

Creative Corner: by Graham Johnson

Brick by brick and stone by stone	I'll laugh and sing and laugh once more
My life rebuilds again	And maybe there will be
The ebb and flow of memories tides	Someone to laugh and sing and love
Have washed away the pain	And live alongside me.

Te Taitokerau Tangata Whai Ora Network
Programs held at TTTWON, 73 Water St, W'rei

Jan -Feb 2014

Monday 12.30-2.00 pm Consumer Education with Kirsten Neckelson
Informative, interactive, interesting strength based recovery topics

Tuesday 2.00-3.00 pm Low Impact Exercise Group with Clare O'Brien
For those who don't like the gym but do want to improve their fitness
Fun and non-threatening

Tuesday 4.30-6.00pm The Network Band

Wednesday 11am-1pm AoD Peer support
A closed group – see Richard or Graham for orientation

Wednesday 5.00-6.00 pm Deep Relaxation with Helen Ware
A technique that helps dealing with stress and anxiety

Thursday 1.00-3.00 pm Singing Group with Clare O'Brien
For those who want to give singing with others a try – Lots of fun

Friday 12.00-2.00 pm Friday Forum
Consumer run, relaxed: Tea, coffee , bikkies, discussion, ideas

Annual General Meeting – TTTWON – 11am April 11th

73 Water St Whangarei

**Election of Board Members
Financial Report
Yearly Report**

**This is the time to have your say, elect board members
-Maybe even become a board member?**

