



YOUR STORY IS OUR STORY...

We are particularly interested in highlighting the stories of young adults living in NZ who have had experiences commonly referred to as 'psychosis'. This may include periods of losing touch with the 'real world', hearing or seeing things that others do not perceive, believing in things differently to others, extreme ups or downs in mood with unusual experiences or beliefs, and feeling lost and confused. However, we welcome anyone who is willing to share their story with us, including the experiences of families and friends who have supported a loved one experiencing mental distress or 'psychosis'.



WHY THIS BOOK?

When people go through a first experience of mental distress or 'psychosis' it can be really challenging and difficult to know how to move through these experiences and find ways to continue living life in the way they want to.

Hearing the stories of people who have already been through it and are managing to move forward in their lives can be really helpful. It can help someone feel less alone in it, provide them with some useful ideas that they could use in their own life, and it could be helpful for friends and families to learn more about experiences of mental distress and 'psychosis', and finding ways through, so that they can support their loved ones.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Contact Eleanor at Totara House in Christchurch by telephone: 03 335 4525 or email the New Zealand Early Intervention in Psychosis Society (NZEIPS) at: nzeips@gmail.com



OUR STORIES:

A COLLECTION OF WRITTEN
AND ARTISTIC ACCOUNTS
OF EXPERIENCING HUMAN
DISTRESS AND FINDING
OUR WAYS THROUGH...

This project is a collaboration between Totara House, part of the Canterbury District Health Board, and the New Zealand Early Intervention in Psychosis Society (NZEIPS)






QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU WRITE:

- What was life like before experiencing mental distress or 'psychosis'?
- How do you understand your journey to becoming distressed or experiencing 'psychosis'?
- What has helped you, or helps you, to live your life, following on from (or alongside) your experiences of distress/'psychosis'?
- What challenges have you faced in your journey and what has helped you to keep going?
- What is life like for you at the moment, and what do you hope for the future?
- What do you do now to maintain your recovery/wellbeing?
- What have you learnt from your experiences?
- Is there anything you would like to have known earlier? What advice would you give to someone who is going through it now?

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU CREATE YOUR ART:

- What picture or pictures would represent your experiences of 'psychosis' or mental distress?
 - What picture represents how life is for you now?
 - How could you show the journey that you have been on in a visual way?
 - Are there any positive or inspiring images you can create that might help other people feel more hopeful about getting through their experiences of 'psychosis'/distress?
 - When you think about 'psychosis', human distress, recovery and wellbeing.....put a pen to paper.....just draw a mark.....and see what it turns into.....
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WHAT IS INVOLVED?


We want to include written text about your experiences of 'psychosis'/mental distress and ways you found through it, and/or art work that represents your experiences of distress and journey to wellbeing, with an explanation of what your art work means to you.

Writing can be anything from a few lines, such as giving some words of encouragement or advice, a poem or lyrics, or up to 1500 words of writing in more depth about your experiences.

Stories can be about just one aspect of your experience of 'psychosis' and journey towards wellbeing, e.g. symptoms, coping strategies, experiences of hospital, engaging in talking therapies, thoughts about medication, receiving social support etc. Or stories can be a summary of your experiences as a whole.

Art work can be anything in visual form, such as a simple drawing with a pen or pencil, paintings or photographs, or any other form of art you create. You can send us a digital image of your art, or if you send us the original, we will make a digital copy and return the original.

We also welcome families & friends to submit their words or art work about their experiences.




WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I SEND SOMETHING?

A group from Totara House and NZEIPS will read the submissions and consider how to order these in the book. Different sections of your story could be in different chapters, or left as a whole. Some editing may occur to help us put the book together, but we will keep submissions as close to their original as possible and will share draft versions with you before the book is finalised.

Once we have received a submission or intention to submit, we will send you a consent form to send in with your story/artwork. This will explain how your story/artwork will be used, and ensures that you are giving us permission to include your story. You will also be asked if you would like to include your name or a pseudonym to protect your anonymity.

The book will take some time to finish. We welcome submissions until early 2020. After this please just get in touch to see if submissions are still open.

Once the book is complete we will send the contributing authors/artists a copy. Some copies will be printed and distributed to Early Intervention Services across NZ. These will be available for people with experiences of 'psychosis', their families, and the mental health workers who are supporting them. The resource will also be available to download from the NZEIPS and Talking Minds websites.



CONSENT FOR USING WRITTEN AND ARTISTIC MATERIAL



PROJECT TITLE: Our Stories Project

PROJECT ORGANISERS: Tōtara House and NZEIPS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: We are developing a written resource of people's personal experiences of first-episode psychosis and recovery. This resource will include written narratives and visual artwork created by people who have experienced a first episode of psychosis, and from family members or friends who have supported a loved one through a first episode of psychosis. The purpose of this is to help provide stories of hope and recovery for other people and their families affected by psychosis. Please see the Our Stories information sheet for more details.

The final book/resource will be available in printed form and distributed to Early Intervention Services across the country. These will be available for people who have experienced psychosis, and their families, and mental health workers who are supporting people who have experienced psychosis. The resource will also be available to download from the NZEIPS website www.earlypsychosis.org and the Talking Minds website www.talkingminds.co.nz. The resource may also be used at training sessions and presented at conferences relevant to first episode psychosis or mental health.

CONSENT: By completing and signing this consent form, you are agreeing to the terms that are listed below. Please tick the boxes below if you agree to the terms:

I (print name) _____ confirm that:

- I am over the age of 18 years
- The Our Stories project has been explained to me
- I agree for my written or artistic submission to be included in the project
- I understand that my submission cannot be withdrawn after the resource has been finalised and published, although I may amend or withdraw my submission until that point.
- I understand that I will retain the Intellectual Property Rights / Copyright for my submission, but I am happy for it to be published in this project. I understand that I am free to use my images and written words for any other purpose I wish
- I am happy for my submission or parts of my submission (e.g. a quote) to be used by the NZEIPS for the purpose of promoting the resource, e.g. being shared at the NZEIPS conference, being part of NZEIPS communications with their membership list
- I understand that there will be a reasonable level of support to me if my involvement in this project has a negative impact on me or my family. This could include conversations with members of the NZEIPS team regarding the project, or support from my mental health team as needed

- I confirm that I do not require and will not receive any money payment for taking part in this project
- I agree that NZEIPS may at any time, stop using my written words or artwork, for any reason
- I understand that my submission will be amended to remove any personal information that might be identifiable to me so that my submission will remain anonymous. I am happy for my submission to be provided with a pseudonym or wish to be credited as _____ (please write the name you wish to be credited with, which will be publicly available)

OPTIONAL WEBSITE CONSENT

- I am happy for my submission to be used outside of the project as a standalone image or story on the NZEIPS website

I am happy for my submission to be used on the NZEIPS website for the following length of time:

- 2 years indefinitely

After this time I will be contacted to check if I am still happy for my submission to be used on the website through the contact details I have provided at the end of this page.

- I understand that I can withdraw my consent for my submission to be used on the NZEIPS website and NZEIPS will make reasonable efforts to remove written words and artwork from circulation, but cannot guarantee that all such materials will be removed from circulation

OPTIONAL AUDIO/VISUAL CONSENT

- I am happy for my written submission to be audio-recorded by a voice actor, to be used in an audio or audio-visual (film) version of the book. I understand that this will be unable to be removed or amended once the resource is finalised.
- I am happy for my art submission to be used in an audio-visual (film) version of the book. I understand that this will be unable to be removed or amended once the resource is finalised.

Your name (please print): _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____ Phone: _____

(Providing your details will enable us to contact you regarding the project and will not be passed onto anyone else for any other purposes)

If you have any questions about this consent form or the project please contact NZEIPS at the email address nzeips@gmail.com