

How mental health related stigma and discrimination leads to social exclusion.

An iceberg is used as a metaphor because from the surface it looks much smaller than it is.

We can think of things like racism, sexism and other forms of inequality as having their own icebergs.

When a person or a community experiences one form of exclusion, the impact of other forms of exclusion can increase.



In our families, work and communities **we can all** do things small and large, to chip away at the icebergs.



Messages: "Harden up",
"Take a chill pill".

Ideas: "It's a weakness", "It's simple to deal with", "It's not real".

Language: Psycho, nut-job, loony-tune, crazy, head-case.

Avoiding people with mental distress either from fear, or not knowing what to do.

Sensational or imbalanced news stories and media.
Lack of understanding about mental distress.

Sickness **Poverty** **Fear**
Hopeless **Stereotypes** **Suicide**
Lost opportunities

Stigmatising views

- Seeing a diagnosis or behaviour – not the person.
- Blaming people for becoming unwell.
- Assuming people aren't capable or trustworthy.
- Assuming people are dangerous.
- Assuming all difficulties the person faces are because of "mental illness".
- Denial of strengths of people with mental distress.
- Viewing people with mental health concerns as not "normal" and incredibly different from you.
- Paternalism: treating adults or young people like children who need care and can't make reasonable decisions.
- Seeing all mental distress as something medically or biologically wrong. "They're sick."
- Never seeing people's growth, potential and recovery.

Structural inequity

- Not enough money to support mental wellbeing in society.
- Insurance declined.
- Twice as likely to be fatally shot (in NZ) by police.
- Difficulty gaining and keeping housing.
- Difficulty gaining and keeping employment.
- Use of force and restraint by police.
- Use of force and restraint by healthcare staff.
- Group does not reach educational potential.
- Potential for advancement gets limited.

Potential impact on individual

- Embarrassed to seek help.
- Lack of inclusion and support.
- Silenced – I can't tell anyone what things are like.
- Silenced – My family is ashamed.
- Silenced – Only reaching for help when I am really struggling... Often only high distress becomes visible... Sometimes the path to wellbeing is longer than it needs to be.
- Silenced – I can't share parts of my life experience openly.
- Silenced – I am successful – but no one knows this other part of my experience.
- Alcohol/drugs picked up to cope or escape.
- Avoidance, isolation to cope.

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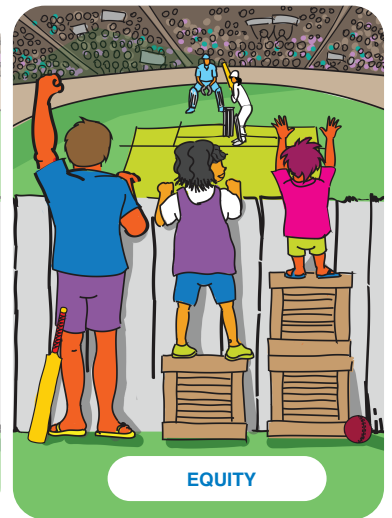
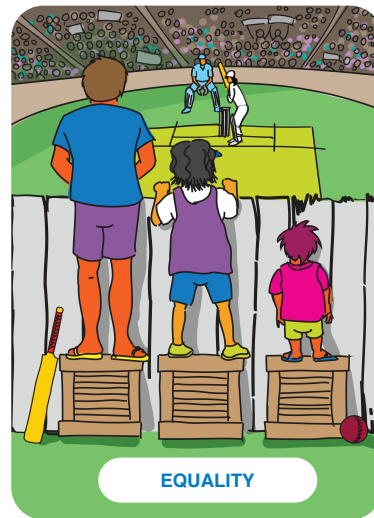
LIKE MINDS, LIKE MINE®
Whakaitia te Whakawhiu i te Tangata

It isn't all doom
and gloom! Turn over



The facts

- 47% of New Zealanders will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime (About **1 in 4 people** right now). They are people from all walks of life; us and all around us.
- **Most people recover!** People recover from even severe mental health conditions – even those who manage ongoing symptoms can live fantastic, contributing lives. At Rethink we believe the experience of mental distress can actually lead to awesome things in people's lives.
- People with mental health conditions are **more likely to be victims** than perpetrators of violent crime.
- The way people experience mental distress varies a lot – and **there is no one explanation for why** people experience this.
 - Causes may include: stress and everyday problems, exposure to severely distressing experiences in the present or in the past, biology, drugs and alcohol.
- For most people who experience mental health struggles, these will start by age 14.



Included versus Excluded

Social inclusion is the extent to which people can exercise their rights and participate, by choice, in the ordinary activities of citizens in their society. It involves making all groups of people within a society feel valued and important.

Stigma and discrimination lead to social exclusion... "Studies on social exclusion have shown it (however it is to be conceptualised) to be destructive; this is shown in its "unique ability" to simultaneously jeopardise four fundamental features of human well-being: belonging, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence" (Mental Health Foundation of NZ¹).

Inclusion feels like:

Sense of family **Not needing a mask**
Belonging
"Getting your self-esteem back a bit"
Feeling connected **Being warm**
Feeling wanted **Not having to hide**

When you watch your own assumptions and treat others with kindness, fairness and openness you are contributing to social inclusion and chipping away at the iceberg. Something I would like to do to promote social inclusion is...

NEED TO TALK?

1737

free call or text
any time

Want to learn more about mental health and wellbeing?

Check out rethink.org.nz for stories, links and information about the experience of mental distress.

On this site you can also find a full stand-alone resource which can be used to build your knowledge, or support staff and group discussions about wellbeing and mental health. You can download and read all the material at www.rethink.org.nz/conversationsforchange



¹ Gordon, S., Davey, S., Waa, A., Tiatia, R., & Waaka, T. (2017). Social Inclusion and Exclusion, Stigma and Discrimination, and the Experience of Mental Distress. Auckland: Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand.