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POD takes off

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POD takes off

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MEDIA RELEASE

Young people who experience moderate and severe mental illness often experience isolation and rejection from their peers and at home. A new project will help young people develop creative projects to end mental illness discrimination in NZ.

Recent research has found that many young people had experienced name-calling, belittling attitudes and had felt excluded by friends and family because they had experienced mental illness.

There is a growing body of evidence showing young people are more likely to be discriminated against than older people who experience mental illness.

"When young people who have experienced mental illness are excluded, everyone misses out," says Director of Strategy, Advocacy & Research for the Mental Health Foundation, Hugh Norris.

"Friends, family members, loved ones and older adults miss out on the unique perspective that a young person who has experienced hardship can bring, and young people who are experiencing distress may not want to seek help due to fears of being ridiculed or shamed," Hugh says.

So what can be done to make mental illness discrimination a thing of the past?

"Young people are best placed to tackle social exclusion from their peers and others. Young people listen to their peers, and they have the creativity to know what will make people sit up and take notice," Hugh says.

The Mental Health Foundation is calling for young talented New Zealanders to apply to take part in POD (Point of Difference), an incubator that will give young creatives the industry contacts, tools for making social change and mentoring they need to bring their vision to life.

"We're looking for young people who are passionate about making a difference for people like them, creating a New Zealand where everyone is accepted and included," Hugh says.

Applications for the first POD closed on 4 March, with further intakes in June 2016 and February 2017. Find out more about [POD](#).

POD is supported by Like Minds, Like Mine, a nationwide programme to end mental illness discrimination in New Zealand.

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