

Media Guidelines

Portrayal of people living with mental distress or illness in Aotearoa



Checklist

Have you considered:

Language

Words can help or hurt others. Use language that promotes inclusivity and reduces prejudice and discrimination.

Sources

Information about mental distress or illness, treatments and the sector are changing constantly. For reliable, accurate and up-to-date information consult widely with experts in the sector and the Mental Health Foundation.

Balance

Include the voices of people who have experience of mental distress or illness and/or use mental health services, along with their whānau, support people or kaumātua where relevant. Also consider showing people as more than their illness.

Cultural sensitivities

Ensure different cultural worldviews on mental health and wellbeing are considered. Seek expert cultural opinion or perspective from kaumātua and Pasifika matua.

Interviews

Interviewing a person or whānau who have experienced mental distress or illness requires compassion, sensitivity and privacy considerations. Take breaks during the interview and check in as you go to ensure the person and/or whānau are doing okay.

Images

When choosing images for a mental health story, try to pick images that emphasise connection and hope. We have an awesome photo library at <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/photolibrary>

Helplines

Visit mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines for more information.