

Graeme

My name is Graeme, I have been asked to come here today to talk about living with a mental illness. And the path my life has taken in the last 12 months.

12 months ago I felt an uncertainty about people from Kaiyu and people in the public. I felt I had no relation to other members of Kaiyu. I felt isolated and different.

I had very little community access and involvement. The majority of the time feeling lethargic, depressed and dreaded the thought of going out of the house. Even a trip down the road was difficult.

My participation with Kaiyu was only two 1:1's a week at one and a half hours each.

I never done any group work, and regularly my Kaiyu time would be just home visits if I didn't cancel first.

I had constant fears of leaving the house, incase I had nowhere to live when I came home. This resulted in me cutting short any time I spent in the community to return home.

Today I have valuable friendships with all Kaiyu CBA members, and feel very comfortable with people in public.

I am not as depressed. And 98 – 99% of the time I look forward to going out. I now enjoy going to Kaiyu as it cheers me up.

I had lots of encouragement from Kaiyu staff to join group activities, which I didn't like at 1st.

Now I really like the group activities and would really miss it if it wasn't there. I would be a very sad person without it.

Today I feel my home is there for me. I can go out for the day rarely worrying about my residence. I now feel supported in my environment.

I would like to thank Richmond Fellowship and Kaiyu for supporting me to find my inner strength

12 months ago I seen no future, I would have found it very difficult to even leave the house to come here and would not have been able to attempt this speech.

So 12 months later I am able to come here and be happy to give this speech. This is a great achievement for me.

I would like to thank Richmond Fellowship, Kaiyu and my family for supporting me to find my inner strength, to start my forward journey to my recovery.