

## Write a one-page recovery story for payment

Deadline: 31 August 2017

### What the story is for

PeerZone is developing a toolkit for people with mental distress and the people who support them. PeerZone Toolkit (aka Swell) will include 52 life challenges in nine domains. Each challenge includes a short article on what works, an activity sheet for people experiencing distress, conversation guide for supporters, and a peer recovery story. Visit [www.swelltoolkit.com](http://www.swelltoolkit.com) to see an example of the content. Visit [www.peerzone.info](http://www.peerzone.info) to find out more about PeerZone

### Why your story is important to us



We already have 36 fantastic recovery stories and the feedback we've had so far is that they are the most important part of our toolkit. These quotes from these well-known story tellers sum it up for us:

*People are hungry for stories. It's part of our very being.*  
Studs Terkel

*There is no greater burden than carrying an untold story.*  
Maya Angelou

*We learn best – and change – from hearing stories that strike a chord within us.* John Kotter

### What we need from you

Each recovery story needs to be half a page to a full page (A4 or US letter) and submitted by Thursday 31 August 2017 to [info@peerzone.info](mailto:info@peerzone.info). People can submit more than one story.

People who submit a story that is published will receive a NZD \$100 Amazon gift voucher and a free copy of 'Madness Made Me' by Mary O'Hagan. The stories will be edited in collaboration with the authors who will decide if they want their story to be an anonymous or not.

Each story will discuss your experience of struggling with and overcoming or managing ONE of the following 11 challenges, especially as it relates to your experience of mental distress:

The topic for the story	The issues you could cover in your story
<b>1. Making friends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How I overcame shyness, fear of rejection etc.</li> <li>• Finding different ways to meet people.</li> <li>• Finding ways to engage with new people.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Family of origin</b> (family we were brought up in)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ways family of origin helped/hindered my wellbeing.</li> <li>• Understanding my place in our family of origin.</li> <li>• Determining the type and level of contact I want.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Healthy relationships</b> (with friends, family and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising my healthy relationships.</li> <li>• Recognising my unhealthy relationships.</li> <li>• How I've learnt to mend or end unhealthy relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Intimate relationships</b> (sexual relationships and partnerships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My experiences with seeking intimate relationships.</li> <li>• The impact of mental distress and medication.</li> <li>• Maintaining intimate relationships over time.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Conflict in relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using communication to resolve conflict.</li> <li>• Overcoming conflict avoidance.</li> <li>• Conflict resolution approaches that work well.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Building self-esteem</b> (believing in myself and feeling good about myself)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of self-esteem for my wellbeing</li> <li>• What helps and hinders my self-esteem.</li> <li>• How I have maintained my self-esteem.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Cultivating acceptance</b> (learning to accept the difficulties of life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of acceptance in my life.</li> <li>• How I have learnt acceptance</li> <li>• The benefits I've experienced from acceptance</li> </ul>
<b>8. Enriching spirituality</b> (whether associated with a religion or not)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How spirituality impacts on my wellbeing.</li> <li>• My experience of spirituality and mental distress.</li> <li>• How spirituality has healed me</li> </ul>
<b>9. Finding contributing roles</b> (eg learning a skill, running a household, volunteering, study, hobbies or work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What it means for me to have a contributing life.</li> <li>• The importance of making a contribution to others.</li> <li>• Approaches to finding and keeping contributing roles.</li> </ul>
<b>10. Finding meaning and purpose</b> (through giving to others, connecting, achieving a goal.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to have meaning and purpose beyond oneself.</li> <li>• The importance of meaning and purpose in my wellbeing.</li> <li>• Approaches to finding meaning and purpose.</li> </ul>
<b>11. Finding hope</b> (for the future)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of hope in my recovery.</li> <li>• The relationship between my hope and motivation.</li> <li>• What helped me to find hope.</li> </ul>

We look forward to receiving your story by 31 August 2017 at [info@peerzone.info](mailto:info@peerzone.info).

Mary O'Hagan  
Director, PeerZone