

People share their stories of mental health recovery in work and life

panorama

March Quarterly Issue 2019

**Special
self-advocacy
edition**

**Roll out the red
carpet for the Young
Person's Formal**

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About us

Flourish Australia is committed to walking beside people with a lived experience of mental health issues as they progress along their recovery journeys. We passionately believe in mental health recovery, and are committed to providing the best possible support and encouragement to people so they can achieve their recovery goals. We offer this help across all 64 of our services in NSW and Southern Queensland.

Chair: [Prof Elizabeth More AM](#)

CEO: [Mark Orr AM](#)

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Panorama

Founded in 1996 in one of Flourish Australia's predecessor organisations (PRA), Panorama has grown to become a lifestyle magazine dedicated to informing and encouraging the recovery journey of readers. Panorama is written, designed and produced almost entirely by people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

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Disclaimer

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Thanks also to Elizabeth Harlow, Chris Grumley, Silvia Kozul, Adelle Salter, Nicole White, Tim Alacantha, Joel, Josh, Kirt, Jake Mooy, Kim Jones, Jade Ryall and all the other great people we forgot to mention.

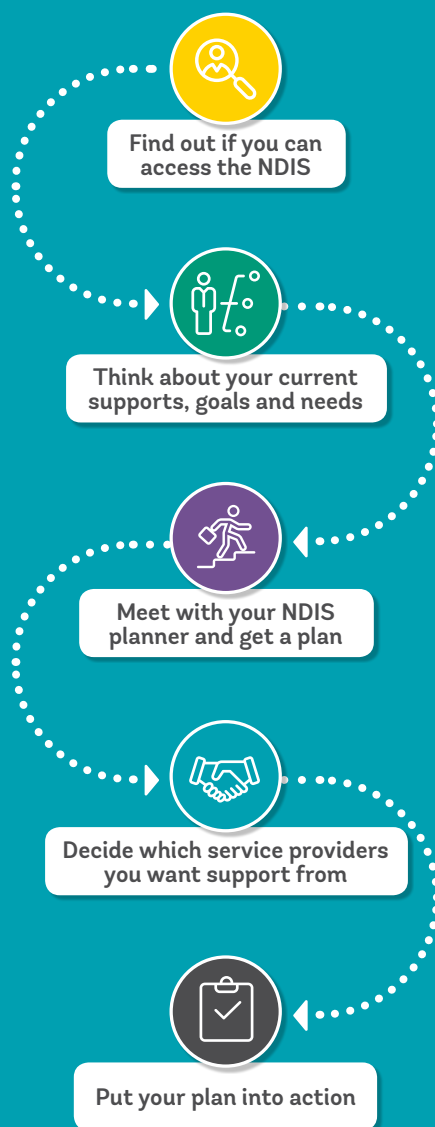
Contributions welcome! We especially like to read recovery stories from people with lived experience of mental health issues!



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If you or someone you know needs support, we are here to help.

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Registered NDIS provider



Roll out the red carpet (literally) for the Youth Formal!

ABOVE: It is not every day you get to step out of a stretch Hummer limousine and walk down the red carpet. Shall we dance? PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

Photos by Neil Fenelon
Story by Warren Heggarty,

For many of us, the high school graduation formal has great significance as a coming-of-age celebration. Unfortunately, many young people miss out on this rite of passage due to mental health issues. This is why a group of Flourish Australia's youth programs, spearheaded by Elizabeth Harlow, launched the Young People's Formal Project. Friday the 15th of February 2019 gave them another chance!

The Formal attracted the attention of the ABC which sent a film crew out and produced an item about it on the 7:30 report on 26 February 2019.

Featured in the report were two of the young people, Jake Mooy and Jessica Bansgrove.

There had been a lot of build up to the big night. Jake Mooy, who accesses Flourish Australia's Seven Hills service, said that a big part of recovery involved learning to handle social situations. "Previous outings with YCLSS have

helped me build up to this."

Starting from Bicentennial Park, the young people climbed aboard a stretch Hummer Limousine for a lap of honour before pulling up outside Figtree and stepping onto the red carpet. At the entrance, they were greeted by a gentleman handing out roses, who just happened to be Andrew O'Brien, Flourish Australia's General Manager, Operations.

From there, they passed along an avenue of golden balloons from the reception area to where the dining tables were set up with still more flowers and decorations. In one corner was a balloon bower where they would later pose for photos, taken by professional photographer Neil Fenelon. There was also a photo booth. In another corner was the dance floor and a fab DJ.

When Panorama spoke to participants a few days after the event, a number of them admitted that they had been nervous to begin with, but that the night went well. If you didn't have a few butterflies at the beginning of a big

night, well, it wouldn't be a big night, would it?

It must be said that some of the young people seem to have spared no effort in making themselves as glamorous as possible. Some of the gowns were truly spectacular, showing a real diversity of styles from hip casual to sequins!

In fact, the young people themselves were involved in every stage of the planning for the evening. Adelle Salter from YPP said 'the young people were responsible for selecting music for the night, and what they wanted to wear and their food preferences.' This sort of involvement is something that Flourish Australia prides itself upon. The key to recovery from mental health issues is becoming involved and taking responsibility.

A big night like this doesn't just happen overnight. According to our sources, the Formal had first been thought up about seven years ago. Logistics were hard – planning a party sounds easy until you actually do it. For example, we heard a rumour that Liz Harlow, Manager of

Events

YCLSS at Seven Hills, was seen at the venue at 11PM the night before making sure everything was perfect. All the staff members at Kogarah YPOP (Young People's Outreach Program), Seven Hills YCLSS (Youth Community Living Support Service), Penrith YCLSS, the YPP (Young People's Program) at Emu Heights (also known as Brumby House), all the young people and all the donors involved deserve accolades for a great success!

To help things along, we were very pleased when the Commonwealth Bank of Australia's Graduates Committee chose Flourish Australia as their charity of choice. Our Board Chair Professor Elizabeth More AM and our CEO Mark Orr AM attended the Committee's Spring Gala when they raised over \$7,000 for Flourish Australia. At the Mental Health Month business breakfast (which featured John Brogden), another \$1,045 was raised towards the project.

Let's also give a shout out to the young people at YPP in Emu Heights for choosing to donate \$474.55 from the profits raised from the Bunnings BBQ they ran in December. To these and all the other donors and contributors we say THANK YOU. Continued page 10

RIGHT (FROM TOP): Some shared a taste for basic black, some shared a common body language, and others just loved to chew on the stems of roses. There was something for everyone at the Youth Formal, thanks to the careful planning and participation of the young people themselves. PHOTOS BY NEIL FENELON
BELOW: Some of the hard working staff of the youth programs, Silvia Kozul (YPOP Kogarah), Nicole White (A/Cluster Manager, Seven Hills), Elizabeth Harlow (YCLSS Seven Hills), Krystal Kennewell (YPP Emu Heights), Jimmy Acosta (YPOP Kogarah) and Chris Grumley (Community Psychiatry Peer Worker, Seven Hills). PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY





Youth Formal

continued from p 9

Flourish Australia's youth services provide intensive outreach support to young people aged 16-24 who are experiencing mental health issues. Through one-to-one mentoring, we assist young people with setting their own life goals and support them through the steps to get to where they want to be so they can stay in control of their mental health recovery journey.

Young people accessing our services tell us that their lived experience of a mental health issue has precluded them from the opportunity to experience a Formal, and the powerful sense of belonging, achievement, community and friendship that comes with this important milestone event.

We hope we can be a part of other events like this to mark the important stages in peoples lives and recovery.



Youth Formal

TOP LEFT: Vineeta, Annalise and Samantha with their YCLSS graduation Certificates. Yes, it was a REAL graduation!
MIDDLE: It was such a glamorous evening, as demonstrated here by Leigh, Hayley, Anna and Silvia!
BOTTOM LEFT Everyone was able to be their own paparazza for the night:
BOTTOM RIGHT: "The name's Bond, James Bond... actually, it's Tim...and Tyler."

All photographs by Neil Fenelon





Tink: Aiming to make three people smile before lunch

ABOVE: Tink painted this flag as a statement about equality PHOTO BY GRANT EVERETT

By Grant J Everett

Tink has been attending the New Outlook day-to-day living centre in Wollongong for about 12 months. Her mental health worker, Carly, helped her to connect up with this service.

Like most of the people who access our services, Tink has a funding package from the NDIS. In addition to New Outlook, Tink has connections with programs such as Partners In Recovery.

Tink is a creative type. She likes playing the ukulele and the djembe (a type of African drum), she sings at New Outlook's karaoke nights, and she creates all kinds of art. Tink is an artist of many different mediums, and has created quite a few works in New Outlook's dedicated art area. Recently, she's been drawing snakes with charcoal and pastels.

Most of all, though, Tink's favourite thing is to make other people happy.

"If I see someone sad, I'll go and make them smile. That's my aim everyday: to make three people laugh or smile before lunch. I'm actually designing a course on how to be happy, on how to love life, so that I can get even better at this.

Of course, it hasn't been easy all the time. Tink has had some very, very serious health issues in the last few years.

"I haven't always been this happy. Two years ago I had surgery and almost died, and it totally changed my outlook on life. It was the deepest, darkest part of hell, and it took time to drag myself out of it. It took me a while, but I got there. Now I'm with the happy part of life, I've gone up to the top of the ladder and stayed there. Now, I don't have any problems, I don't have any stress in my life. If I fall over I get up and laugh about it!"

Being a positive person doesn't mean you ignore reality or pretend something isn't happening: it's about acknowledging it, and then responding.

"Nowadays I'm never half full or half empty: my glass is always full. I find as adults that we forget, what with being swamped with this bill and that bill, how great life really is."

"I was born with NF1 (Neurofibromatosis type 1), and it's gotten into my lungs bad enough to punch holes in them. With

my lung problems, I really, really had to give up cigarettes, and thankfully it's now been 4 years since I had one. I've also had a brain tumour removed, and I still need to get more bloodwork done to make sure I'm all clear. I'm a bit worried about this because I haven't been feeling great the last couple of weeks. But the good news is I still have a brain!"

"Being a positive person doesn't mean you pretend something isn't happening: it's about acknowledging it, and then responding. They told me I only have about 20 years left, but I'm going to prove them wrong!"

"When the dark times were happening, it was hard to imagine getting through it. I hit rock bottom. I couldn't see any hope. But I've come through the other side now. There have been a lot of things that helped me to climb out of the dark."

Tink has made a lot of new friends at New Outlook. They're so close that she considers them her family, and loves spending a lot of time with them. She also has friends outside of this service.

"I have a friend who goes to the movies with me every week. I get paid one week, he gets paid the other week, so we take turns at shouting."

"It makes it a lot easier for me knowing that the other people here have gone through the same things that I have, because that means they understand. My friends will always ask if I'm alright, and I'm like, 'Yeah, I'm alright,' and I do the same for them. You look after your friends. I can tell if they're not doing well, and they know with me."

"I like to mentor people, help people out, teach them new things."

"I had a drug habit when I started at New Outlook, but I haven't had anything for nine weeks. I want to stay clean permanently."

Tink has some charity work planned.

"I'm going to colour my hair to raise money for blood cancer research with World's Greatest Shave. I'm going to bring lots of cans of hair colour, and people can pay \$1 to colour a bit of my hair."

worldsgreatestshave.com

Got a complaint? Here's how to give it some impact

Panorama will be bringing you a series of articles that discuss and describe the various means of self advocacy, also known as “sticking up for yourself”. First up Grant J Everett looks at the basics of making a consumer complaint:



IMAGE PIXABAY PUBLIC DOMAIN

By Grant J Everett

Late last year, Flourish Australia's Buckingham House service at Surry Hills, NSW, hosted a series of free talks called 'Talkin' Together' that were put together by 'Being' and the Department of Free Trading. They were aimed at assisting people to get the most out of the new world of NDIS. This article draws mainly on the fourth workshop 'Making a Complaint.'

What you can do if you have an unacceptable experience with a service provider, including an NDIS service provider? Your complaint could be about any number of things: your landlord making sexually inappropriate comments, the gas company claiming you haven't paid your bill when you know you have, your mobile phone provider changing the terms of your

contract without any warning, or a bakery selling you a curry pie that's gone bad. Not all complaints are dealt with on the spot. Sometimes you need to go 'up the chain' to get satisfaction.

It's okay to complain

Lydia, one of the Talkin' Together facilitators told us that even though she works for the Fair Trading Commission, she would still feel reluctant to complain in her day-to-day life. She said that most people are wired up in the same way. However, all organisations, companies and government departments in Australia must adhere to certain standards. You are entitled by Australian Consumer Law to complain if a service provider fails you, and if the complaint concerns a safety issue, then time is of the essence. Legitimate complaints

aren't "whinging", and they can help a service provider by showing them where they're falling short so they have a chance to make improvements. If you don't say something, they might not even know there's an issue, and that means other people might experience the exact same problem.

So while there's no guarantee one complaint will fix everything, any good business or service will sit up and pay attention whenever a customer is disappointed. The further a complaint is escalated before something is done, the deeper the stain it will leave. In the age of social media, one-star reviews tend to last forever.

When it comes to getting a good outcome from your complaint, the ideal result is one of the 3 Rs: Refund, Replace and Repair.

Senior Independent Advocate

Making complaints can be a frustrating and daunting process. Fortunately, Flourish Australia's Board employs a Senior Independent Advocate specifically to look into complaints from the people who access our service. The Senior Independent Advocate does not report through management and so can operate without fear or favouritism! Read more in Panorama #69, September 2018 pp. 38-39.

Step-by-step complaint checklist

1. It's okay to say something if your rights and/or expectations are not being met
2. Think it over, and talk to someone you trust
3. Focus on the issue, be clear about what you have a problem with
4. Write it down
5. Practise what you want to say
6. Back-up documents are good, but it's okay if you don't have any
7. Tell them what you want to happen; you're the boss
8. Tell them what will happen if they DON'T fix the problem
9. When do you want the change to happen?
10. On the day, you can bring along someone you trust, like an advocate

3Rs

“When it comes to getting a good outcome from your complaint, the ideal result is one of the 3 Rs:

- 1. Refund**
- 2. Replace**
- 3. Repair”**

Get serious!

If you feel that you aren't being heard, mentioning the NSW Fair Trading Commission will make anybody sit up and realise you aren't kidding around. Fair Trading has a “no wrong door” policy where they will help you connect up with an advocate or external department that will best meet your complaint. So even if you don't know the difference between the Commonwealth Ombudsman and a vanilla flan, Fair Trading can provide you with contact details and advice. You can call them on 13 32 20 between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, or visit their website.

www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

Seeing the complaint process in action

At the end of the day facilitators Lydia, Steve and Alisha performed a roleplay to give an example of the complaints process. Lydia played a cleaner who had been paid with NDIS funding to clean Steve's house, and Alisha was the case manager who Steve would call to complain.

As soon as Lydia the cleaner arrived, she was behaving inappropriately towards Steve: flirting, offering to swap private numbers, and asking him to meet her down at the pub even though that is not what Steve wanted. To make matters worse, she didn't even clean! And while Steve didn't want to get anybody in trouble, he was concerned that Lydia would continue to not provide the help he was meant to receive.

When Alisha received Steve's valid complaints about the non-cleaning cleaner, she showed what NOT to do: she was dismissive, acted as though every complaint couldn't be true and it was all in Steve's head (gaslighting, in other words), as well as being rude and snappy. To top things off, Alisha told him that even though Lydia hadn't cleaned a single thing, she was still going to get paid the amount agreed upon from Steve's NDIS funding. The result: Lydia will continue to get paid without lifting a finger, meaning Steve won't receive the service his funding is meant to pay for. This is a bad result.

Alisha did a second take on receiving Steve's complaint about the non-cleaning cleaner, and showed how it's MEANT to be done: she apologised to Steve for the poor service, took down the details of his grievances, and explored what she could do to fix the issue. Steve was allocated a new cleaner for next time, and his NDIS funding was not debited for the cleaner who didn't do her job. Success!

“If you don't say something, they might not even know there's an issue, and that means other people might experience the exact same problem.”

In the first scenario, Steve was basically fobbed off over the phone. In the second scenario, his complaint was taken seriously and acted on. The latter is better for everyone, because solving problems ASAP will prevent a situation getting bigger and more explosive.

Sharing stories about our negative experiences

The Making A Complaint forum encouraged audience participation, and we heard stories about the complaints process from the people who were attending the group as well as the facilitators themselves.

Participants

- Anthony Plunkett shared a story about his negative experiences with the customer service of a certain telecommunications provider, and how it scared him off from dealing with this telco ever again.
- A certain Panorama journalist described how he was able to get his in-warranty clothes dryer fixed when it stopped working, despite not having the receipt. Spoiler: he was able to quote what date he bought it and under what name, as well as where it had been delivered.

Facilitators

- Lydia bought some oysters from the Markets, and one of them turned out to have a worm in its shell. When she called the fishmonger to warn them, however, they fobbed her off and told her to wait to speak to the manager on Monday. While Lydia's motivation was to prevent other customers getting sick from eating bad oysters, she was made to feel stingy and petty for complaining. Eventually enough was enough, and Lydia marched down to make it clear that this service wasn't adequate, and something needed to be done.
- Steven told us about a major plumbing issue in his apartment that ruined most of his property beyond repair. At the end of the complaints process he was eventually awarded \$8,000 in compensation, which was a huge help in regaining what he had lost.

About the Talkin' Together groups

Buckingham House hosted a series of “Talkin' Together” groups, each dedicated to teaching valuable life skills like how to avoid scams and learning the basics of contracts. While each of the four classes were self-contained, their content was complimentary. Talkin' Together was provided on behalf of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the NSW Government, as well as being a joint effort by BEING, the Office of Fair Trading and NEAMI.

Thanks to Alisha Bourke, the Project Coordinator from BEING, Lydia from the NSW Fair Trading Commission, and Peer Worker Steve from NEAMI.



Mel's self advocacy against employment discrimination

Above: Mel in her study at home, showing some of the assistive technology related to her sensory disability. She is a member of a certain profession requiring official registration....so we can't show you her face, if you know what we mean.

PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Warren Heggarty

In this second instalment, we look at the experience of Mel who has lived experience of a mental health issue as well as a sensory disability. Rather than live on a pension, she decided to enter a profession and support herself, but once qualified, she found herself in a protracted battle to gain appropriate employment. This was a battle she eventually won.

Note: to protect the identity and privacy of certain parties some specific details have been suppressed in this story.

-Editor

You would expect that a Government Body responsible for registering people for employment would be a model of anti-discrimination rectitude. Mel found it was not quite so simple.

After completing the first of her university degrees and after having already commenced the second, Mel applied to the appropriate Government

Body for registration in her chosen profession. Although she eventually completed all six years of study across two degrees, the Government Body delayed the registration which was required for her to work on a permanent basis within that profession. That meant two whole years without the ability to earn a full time income.

'I had performed really well at university,' says Mel. 'My results ranged from Passes to High Distinctions, my practicums were all successful. I received a lot of positive feedback from my supervisors. I didn't fail any subjects or assignments. I loved my time at university!'

'I was actually approached by the course coordinator of one of the degrees that I completed and was asked to return to university to do some one-on-one tutoring with a student. Then I was asked to do some face-to-face and online tutoring of classes. Part of my duties was marking and assessing student's assignments.'

The Government Body did not outright decline Mel's application for registration, but they didn't approve it, either. They saw her sensory disability as problematic. Instead, they only allowed her to work on a limited casual basis while they considered the case. Mel had many meetings with people from the Government Body, but two years out from her application for full permanent registration, she was still waiting for approval.

During this period in limbo, Mel says that 'the feedback (from supervisors of my casual work) was really good, I did really well. I was working at the one workplace as a casual for three years and I was one of their regular staff members, and that led to a [long term] temporary role.'

So while the registration body avoided making a decision, individual workplaces were giving her long term work! Nevertheless, because she needed to have a stable, predictable income (due to having a mortgage, as we will see in a future story) Mel was driven to apply for much lower paid jobs, such as being an

Advocate for your Rights #2

“It was absolutely worth the effort and I would definitely do it again...I’m really passionate about issues of social justice and fighting for what is right.” -Mel

assistant to the very profession that she was fully qualified to do.

When a person is clearly overqualified, prospective employers can become suspicious and hesitant. They often suspect that ‘overqualified’ job applicants have ‘something wrong with them.’ Either that or they assume the applicant will leave after only a short time for something better and waste all their job training. It’s very difficult for a prospective employee to hide qualifications.

Mel admits that in the early stages of her battle, she may have contributed to her difficulties by not being assertive enough.

Not fair?

Originally, Mel admits that she was talking herself down. She was going along with the Government Body’s idea that there was one common task of her profession that she could not perform. This would have required her to rely on colleagues to cover for her. There were suggestions that this would not have been fair on those colleagues. However after a while, as she gained more casual experience and confidence, she realised that with the support of reasonable adjustments she WAS capable of this task.

At length, the Government Body organised a an occupational therapy assessment. Such an assessment is not normally required for people entering this profession, but it was deemed necessary because of Mel’s sensory disability. To her horror, the assessment seemed to be entirely based on measuring her perceived weaknesses rather than looking at the considerable

strengths that she obviously possessed in order to have come this far.

‘The assessment was humiliating,’ says Mel. ‘It was insulting, it was embarrassing. I was assessed without any of my assistive technology (see box) I was asked to perform certain work duties without any prior notice, on the spot. I was asked to use a computer without any assistive technology, in front of other people. Basically it felt like I was set up to fail.’

‘Some of the things that were said to me by the occupational therapist I thought were really inappropriate. They had no prior experience assessing someone with a sensory disability, they’d only assessed people with physical disabilities.’



ABOVE: Mel with one of her chief supporters.
PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY

In the end, however, Mel’s persistence prevailed. The Government Body acknowledged that the occupational assessment had not been ideal. Although it did not admit any liability, it made a small *ex gratia* payment and agreed to approve her for permanent employment.

‘I’ve gained a sense of achievement,’ says Mel. ‘I won’t deny it was an exhausting process and at the end of it I was broken for a little while. But once I gained more ongoing employment (and I’ve been in long term employment now for a number of years and have been excelling in my profession) I’ve felt really empowered.’

‘I’m incredibly happy that I fought the process because I know what I did was right. I knew that what was happening

to me was completely wrong and I also wanted to make sure that this wouldn’t happen to other people along the way.’

‘I know that at least one person with a similar disability to me who has applied for registration in the same profession and has gone through without any difficulties within the past few months!’

‘It was absolutely worth the effort and I would definitely do it again. If anything like this ever came up I would keep fighting because I’m really passionate about issues of social justice and fighting for what is right. I don’t believe in discrimination and I will fight for non-discrimination as hard as I can, always.’

In June Panorama we will return to Mel and discover that her Anti-Discrimination adventures weren’t quite over yet! But first, on the next page, we will look at Jessica’s desire to be an advocate for people living with mental health issues.

What are Reasonable Adjustments, and what is Assistive Technology?

Under the Anti-Discrimination Act, employers may not refuse employment simply because of a physical or sensory disability or mental health issue. Employers must make any reasonable adjustment to the workplace required to accommodate them. Government funding is available to cover the cost of this reasonable adjustment.

In Mel’s case, for example, she required assistive technology related to her sensory disability. As you can see from the photo, she even has some of her own equipment! Other types of reasonable adjustments might include variation of work procedures, flexibility of work hours, or modifications to the work place.

Voicing concerns about the system

By Jessica B.

This is the third in our series on Advocacy for Recovery. Here, Jessica tells how her experiences spurred her on to advocate for people with mental health issues.

After many hospital admissions from the age of 16, Jessica found that there was a lot of room for improvement.

Panorama also spoke to Flourish Australia Professional Practice Manager Janet Ford about better ways of handling the situations about which Jessica speaks.



ABOVE: Moving out of home at 16 can often lead to greater difficulty but Jessica found it was 'the best decision I ever made' especially as she had support and remained in contact with her family. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Penrith PHOTOS BY WARREN HEGGARTY

WARNING: This article deals with the issue of physical restraint

When someone is agitated and emotionally unwell, there's a lot you can do to 'de-escalate' the situation. It involves talking to the person.

Unfortunately, in my experience of many hospital admissions from the age of 16 there have been times when nurses and even police have acted in ways that have made the situation worse! Thinking about my experiences has made me interested in the field of advocacy for people with mental health issues.

I was 16 years old and in a hospital emergency department. I was a bit agitated and kept walking off, so they decided to tie my leg to the bed to stop me, saving Security the trouble of keeping an eye on me. I couldn't reach the nurse's buzzer and I couldn't go to the toilet.

Another guy who was visiting someone else saw them tie me to the bed and

went off at the nurse. 'How could you tie a child to the bed?!' he said. I couldn't understand it either. I hadn't been doing anything violent.

On another occasion in hospital, there were police in the room and they went really over the top. They had me down with a knee in my chest and handcuffed me to the bed. I was restrained by all four limbs. It was over the top because all I had done was I had confessed to having self-harming thoughts.

I have also been placed in seclusion. One time I was placed in a seclusion room in my underwear and felt extremely embarrassed and vulnerable. The nurses suggested they would take my underwear off me as well if I didn't behave.

There was one nurse I met who used restraint as a 'go-to' for any problem. If I was boisterous she would say 'If you don't calm down I'll sedate you.' [This is called 'chemical restraint'- Ed] When you hear that every day for weeks at a time it

is a real problem.

Some nurses are lovely of course, but some others aren't! It seems that there are a lot of people in the profession who just don't have the personal qualities to be able to work with people who are mentally unwell. You get nurses who scream at you 'WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!' They say unhelpful things which make things worse.

Of course, the better approach –talking to people- takes time. I find that time is something that staff have very little of in a hospital setting. In my experience of community settings such as Flourish Australia, people DO have the time to talk.

Before coming to Flourish Australia's YCLSS [Youth Community Liaison Support Service], I had reached a point in my life where I was resigned to the belief that the way things were, was the way they would always be and that nothing would ever improve for me.

Advocacy for Recovery #3

In clinical settings, like hospital, even the environment, the white walled rooms, can put you on edge. It is a very intimidating setting. Another negative aspect of the clinical setting is boredom. I remember this from my very first hospital admission to the short stay unit at a hospital which only has six or so beds. I thought it was going to be wild and terrifying but over the two days I was there it wasn't too bad on that occasion. Except for the boredom!

Later, when I was admitted to actual mental health units, there were more severe problems. With about thirty beds and being the youngest it was quite scary. I'm nice to people so that helped me avoid worse trouble, but it is a very intimidating setting. And it is so boring.

They don't seem to do anything for you except give you medication. There are no activities, sometimes there seems to be no treatment. In a hospital situation, you don't learn to deal with the issues that brought to you hospital in the first place! It then becomes a 'revolving door' where you return to hospital again and again.

That was quite unlike my experience at Flourish Australia. When I began accessing Flourish Australia's service at Penrith, I found that they would come out to my place to see me. The way staff treated me was more friendly and there was more general chatter. That made me feel more relaxed and less under pressure. I felt I could be more open and honest about things.

Last year, Flourish Australia asked me if they could write about my recovery journey in the Annual Report. I agreed. As my article in the 2017-2018 Annual Report on pages 32-33 says, I graduated from YCLSS feeling empowered by the experience. I started living in a unit of my own and set out to achieve some significant life goals.

One thing I have done volunteer work with the local State Emergency Service (SES) at Claremont Meadows.

Another of those goals involves working to 'influence political decision makers in mental health matters.' You may have read about how I met the then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at a 'politics in the pub' event in Penrith and was able to speak to my concerns about the mental health system.

The local MP for Mulgoa and Minister Marise Payne was there too and we were planning to have a private meeting to discuss it further. That was interrupted by a change of Prime Minister and a change of Ministerial portfolio for Marise Payne but I still hope to go ahead with it.

One of the biggest but most beneficial steps I have ever taken was to move out of home at 16. It was a very poor home environment at the time and my parents had actually become burnt out. I decided to move into a youth refuge. That gave

my parents a break and meant that I had support. I have remained in contact with my family and have stayed at home on a few occasions since. So moving out actually helped a lot.

My mental health issues have fluctuated over the years but are now mostly under control. One ongoing problem I have is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I am a lot better now than I was ten years ago when it first appeared.

I am currently on my Ps for motorbike riding and I am learning to drive a car too!



Flourish Australia's practice is based on restoring dignity

Flourish Australia's professional practice manager, Janet Ford, says that restraint and seclusion such as that which Jessica experienced are actually prohibited in our services. "People who access our services do so from their homes in the community and there is no place for something like seclusion in people's homes, or in our centres," says Janet.

As for 'restrictive practices', they are not very common. 'Most often where we employ restrictive practices it will involve something like cigarettes. An example would be where we hold on to a person's cigarettes and hand them out at set times so that the person does not run out and go through withdrawals before pay day.'

'Initially, we would want to come to an agreement with the person. "Let us help you not to run out of smokes before pay day." If they say "OK", fine, but if it doesn't work out and the person becomes agitated due to withdrawals all the time, we might consider an application to the Restrictive Practices Authorisation Panel. We would have to demonstrate why it is unsafe to continue as we are and how a restrictive practice will help people. It's a very lengthy process which is time-limited.'

How do we deal with situations where a person who accesses our services might be highly distressed?

"De-escalation is a way of allowing the person the opportunity to regain control over themselves, to help them to become more calm. We focus on restoring or maintaining dignity. To do this we will use open body language. We won't get too close to them, but we will aim to stay with the person and aim to sit down rather than stand up. We'll concentrate on the here and now. "I can see you're very angry." We won't try to solve problems because that would not be a good time for problem solving. Flourish Australia offers a training module on de-escalation.'

"We also apply boundaries. When we visit a person in their home who becomes abusive for some reason, we will say to them "I like visiting you but it doesn't work well if you use abusive language, we need to work something out if you want me to visit." We expect people to behave responsibly.'

Flourish Australia's approach to restricted practices is covered in several policy documents including 'Duty of Care and Dignity of Risk,' 'Restrictive practices' and 'Medication support.'



Dr Jeffrey Chan asks: Can we end restraint and seclusion in Australia?

Constructively working towards improving the rights and dignity of people with disability

by Grant J Everett

WARNING: This article deals with the issue of physical restraint and seclusion. Please talk with someone if you feel distressed by it.

Dr Jeffrey Chan of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission was the keynote speaker for Flourish Australia's 2018 Annual General Meeting. His address centred around restraint and seclusion, and how commonly these practises are used on people who have a disability for the purposes of behavioural management. Rather than just wanting to reduce the frequency of restraint and seclusion that is currently being used on Australians who have a disability, Dr Chan wants to see the end of their use in this country altogether.

Part of Dr Chan's job at the NDIS Quality

& Safeguards Commission is to deal with detailed updates on all the instances of restraint that happen across the country, and to submit weekly reports about it to the rest of the Commission. Statistically, he found that the people who are most likely to experience being restrained or secluded in Australia are those with mental health issues, intellectual issues or behavioural issues, as well as people who are elderly, people in the corrective system, and children and youth in the justice system. As an estimated half a million Australians with some form of disability have a high chance of experiencing restraint in some form, Dr Chan said it was understandable that the Commission takes a very strong approach in regulating its use.

Dr Chan has spent fifteen years studying restraint and seclusion in Australia, which can be broadly defined as "anything that restricts the rights and freedom of movement of a person." Depending on a range of factors, some workers (such as psychiatric nurses in mental health units) currently have the power to restrain and seclude people under their care whenever it is deemed necessary to prevent harm. This kind of interven-

tion can be used on people who display "challenging behaviours" or "behaviours of concern" like aggression, self-harm, fire lighting and property damage. A restraint response is supposed to be a last resort, as well as being proportionate to the potential harm it is attempting to avoid. Whenever restraint is used, all efforts need to be made to apply the least restrictive kind for the shortest possible time. In addition to mental health units, restraint also happens in supported accommodation, general hospitals, aged care facilities and prisons.

After all this time, Dr Chan has come to the conclusion that not only do restraint and seclusion provide no therapeutic benefit, but they are inherently dangerous to everybody involved, no matter what precautions are taken. He found there's no such thing as a "safe" kind of restraint that can prevent all potential injuries from happening to either party, regardless of training. As restraint attempts can cause anything from nose bleeds and bruising to hairline fractures and even death, Dr Chan told us that 100% safe restraint techniques simply do not exist. On top of that, staff who are formally trained in using restraint

are statistically more likely to attempt its use than staff members who haven't. Although many people might believe they know how to use restraint safely, Dr Chan has seen quite a few reports where the injuries were caused while people were *learning* these "safe" methods!

Dr Chan's extensive studies into restraint practises across many settings have unequivocally found that restraint does not reduce antisocial behaviours or increase pro-social behaviours, and only raises the chances of future conflict and ill-will. From an economic perspective, restraint practises are much more likely to incur a cost without providing anything in return, an investment that never pays a dividend. As mental health workers are trained to operate from a therapeutic perspective, Dr Chan has come to the conclusion that restraint practises are not consistent with the recovery model, and have no place in contemporary mental health management. Dr Chan told us the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission has examined the international evidence and made a commitment to "raise the bar" for the rights of persons with disabilities. Although the USA, UK and Europe are all focussed on *reducing* restrictive practises, Dr Chan told us that his agency is committed to upholding the rights and dignity of people with mental health issues in this country, and are dedicated to bringing our mental health system into the 21st Century by *eliminating* restrictive practises altogether.

"We make no apologies for that," Dr Chan said. "The status quo for people with disabilities must change. The NDIS in itself is a significant social policy reform agenda, and this is an opportunity for us to change the paradigm of how we view people with disability. And so it is no longer just talking about improving quality of life, it's also about safeguarding dignity. I make this distinction based on the difference between dignity versus quality of life."

A key tool that Dr Chan and his peers are using to rid our system of restraint is breaking down the myths that surround it. Dr Chan has had many face-to-face interviews with people who have experienced being restrained, those who do the restraining, as well as the families of the restrained. He found that being restrained can create feelings of violation, and if it happens to an already-traumatised person it can greatly increase their odds of suffering distressing flashbacks.

The staff members who apply restraint generally don't feel safe doing it, either, and this can lead to anger and distress. If a staff member has a background of trauma, for instance, simply witnessing somebody causing an injury can cause them to re-experience these past hardships. It can also lead to a higher incidence of leave and psychological distress.

Chemical, mechanical, physical, and environmental restraint are all about restricting someone's movement. This can mean injecting strong psychotropic medication, bolting or strapping someone in place, or physically pinning them down. All forms of restraint carry risks, from medication side effects to muscle wastage and injuries to both parties, and there are many rules in regards to how these techniques are used. However, it would be naive to say that these rules are always adhered to. **Seclusion** traditionally means preventing somebody from exiting a room, but it's broader than that. Dr Chan has seen group homes where masking tape spells out where residents can and can't go. None of these techniques are supposed to be used as a form of discipline or retaliation.

What is Flourish Australia's policy?

Flourish Australia staff are PROHIBITED from using restraint and seclusion. We don't tackle, inject, or lock people in a room. If somebody accessing a Flourish Australia service becomes distressed, simply taking them aside for a positive, strengths-based, de-escalating chat can work wonders. This can help both parties to develop a shared understanding of the cause of the distress, allowing them to build on their strengths and gain new skills, and hopefully decrease the frequency and impact of future distress.

What did the audience think?

Jessica B, who accesses Flourish Australia's YCLSS service at Penrith, saw

Dr Chan's talk. "I think pretty much everything he said was spot on," she said. Jessica has had personal experience of restraint, restrictive practises and seclusion, and tells her story on pages 10 and 11 of this issue Panorama.

Following Dr Chan's talk, Janet Meagher AM, recipient of the Order of Australia and a lifelong advocate of the rights of people with mental health issues, commented on how she has personally been subjected to restraint and seclusion, and how many of us have gone into these systems as traumatised people seeking help, only to end up even more traumatised as a result.

If Australia can showcase a system that no longer relies on restraint, who knows how far it could spread? Could this be the start of something huge?

In his work with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Dr Chan also plays a role with improving NDIS support and services across Australia, actively regulating the NDIS market, providing national consistency, promoting safety and quality in services, resolving problems, and identifying areas for improvement.

Sources:

"Restrictive Practices: The use of restrictive practices in Australia", Australian Law Reform Commission

www.alrc.gov.au/publications/use-restrictive-practices-australia



ABOVE: Janet Meagher AM commenting on her personal experiences with being physically restrained. PHOTO Neil Fenelon

Mozzy and Donna

By Warren Heggarty

Mozzy from Peak Hill in Central Western NSW, was elected Chair of the Flourish Australia Community Advisory Council (CAC), which is the representative voice for all of the people who access Flourish Australia's services. 'I want to contribute and make a difference for people,' says Mozzy. In wanting to make a difference for his peers Mozzy has experienced a positive effect on his own recovery journey.

'I just want to emphasise how much being a part of the CAC has improved my sense of self worth' says Mozzy. 'I'd like to see other people take this sort of opportunity when it arises. Give it a go!'

'I was still very reserved when a peer worker approached me about standing for the CAC. I resisted at first. Then I thought about it. Then I decided I'll do it... but only if I'm going to make a difference.'

'The CAC has given me so much opportunity to say and do things. It shows I CAN make a difference. It shows that I CAN help.'

'Society is still very judgemental which creates barriers towards people with disabilities but Flourish Australia does not fall short in supporting us.'

Isolation

Before his involvement with Flourish Australia, Mozzy told Panorama he was quite isolated. He had a shed where he might happily spend 18 hours a day 'coming up with plans that didn't eventuate.'

'Flourish Australia has brought me back out of my shell. I'm no longer sitting in the back corner. If I go to Maccas or something I'm no longer worried who sees me.'



ABOVE: Donna (left) and Mozzy (right) have alternated between the roles of "carer" and "cared-for." PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

Recovery Story/ Carer's Story

At nearby Parkes, Mozzzy has been attending group activities such as cooking, art, walking and Wednesday outings. Luckily he is able to drive. 'I know there are some other people in Peak Hill who would benefit the same as me but they can't access Flourish Australia in Parkes. People miss out due to a lack of transport.'

Transport

Mozzy's wife Donna agrees. To get to Parkes from Peak Hill (population 1,200), there is a school bus that leaves first thing in the morning. It only costs \$2.50 for a pensioner, but because there is only one service you end up in Parkes for the whole of the day to attend a two hour group session. Then there is a community bus which caters for medical visits or shopping excursions.

'I don't like malls or shopping that much' admits Mozzzy. 'Buying on line is better. I don't think I'd be happy sitting in Parkes all day!'

Donna thinks they should open up the railway to passengers again.

The lack of transport, and the cost of what little there is available, is a big issue for country people. Mozzzy makes a 100km round trip between his home and Flourish Australia at Parkes. In addition, he has had to travel 150km to Dubbo to undergo hydrotherapy for ankylosing spondylitis (a serious, debilitating form of arthritis that affects the spine) which he has lived with since 1995.

Medical or disability?

After three years of travel to Parkes, and four years to Dubbo, the cost mounts up, especially for a pensioner. However, when Mozzzy applied for assistance through NDIS, it was considered that his situation was of a medical nature, rather than disability and so he has not qualified for a package.

'My back gets worse when I don't do hydrotherapy' says Mozzzy. 'The cost of \$140 per fortnight on a pension is quite steep. When you think about it, going to hydrotherapy and attending Flourish Australia groups actually keeps me out of hospital. In a way I'm actually saving the taxpayer money so I'm not sure that rationing NDIS support is the best thing

to do.'

'When the NDIS first came in' says Mozzzy, 'it scared so many people. They said to themselves, well if I don't get the NDIS then Flourish Australia won't be there for me.'

Readers should remember that Flourish Australia is willing and able to help people with planning and preparation to apply for NDIS packages. You won't have to do it alone!



The Family and Carer's role

Mozzy and Donna have been married since 1994 and they have two children. Previously, Mozzzy ran a business involved in building maintenance and landscaping.

'I had to give that away when my condition deteriorated. Ankylosing spondylitis doesn't get better. It is very painful and sometimes I am not able to do very much, even with pain killers. 15 years ago, I raced cars for a couple of seasons.'

'It was a doctor that encouraged that' recalls Donna. 'If you stop doing things, you'll lose it.'

'You have to keep doing whatever you can' says Mozzzy.

In that situation of declining physical health, it is not surprising that Mozzzy experienced anxiety, depression, and related problems.

'Depression got me the worst. Being physically unable to do things, to do things that I was able to do before...at one stage, I found myself doing things that were actually making things worse.

The doctor had not fully communicated things like how the medication worked and so on. Because of that misunderstanding, I ended up doing the opposite of what I needed! Flourish Australia has helped me to find better ways of dealing with my problems.'

Donna is also Mozzzy's carer.

'I'm lucky to have a supporting family.' He says. 'I used to play soccer and footy and cricket as a kid and I'll still play soccer, but my knee needs replacing. Only I'm too young for the operation!'

Challenges

Donna has had challenges of her own. In 2002 she was involved in a freak accident where the rim of a sprint car wheel blew up and hit her in the face. She had severe head injuries as well as brain injury which has required extensive surgery.

'So even though according to Centrelink Donna is the carer,' says Mozzzy, 'I do things for her as well, when she's in hospital, but we're both each other's carers.'

'Physical pain is one thing,' says Donna, 'but I find that the other types of pain, verbal pain if you want to call it that, hurts me more.'

While recovering from the accident, Donna developed osteomyelitis in her forehead which is where the bone becomes catastrophically infected. She has had many different plates inserted all over her face, and has had ongoing problems with infections from that. The plates have had to be removed to control the infections.'

'Hopefully next year I'll get a new forehead' says Donna. She had originally been booked in for the surgery in May 2018 but it had to be cancelled. One consequence of her accident has been that it has drawn other people's attention to safety when performing maintenance on racing cars.

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RecLink Sponsors Surfing Group at Bondi Beach



By Krissy Gram

In October, a group of us from Flourish Australia's Buckingham House in Surry Hills went over to Bondi Beach for a surf!

RecLink lined it up and so it was free for participants (thanks RecLink!).

Conditions were great for learning and it was a fun and successful day. We'll be keen to arrange another day in the coming months.

Participant Cheryl Tang said: 'I'd been meaning to get around to going for a surfing lesson, but I never acted on my idea until the opportunity arose with the Buckingham House outing to Let's Go Surfing at Bondi beach. I had fun riding the waves in the surging rush of the ocean. Even though I tired out really easily and had to rest, I was happy to have been a part of the action. I look forwards to going again.' By the way, Cheryl had a story in December 2018 Panorama!

We had a couple of 'try surfing' days in October 2017 as well and some of the people were back for more in the Spring just past.

We were so pleased to be in the ocean. One of the participants commented on how therapeutic it was. This lady had a few tries at catching the waves and riding them in before ditching the board and enjoying the clear water. They found

the paddling exhausting. The guys from Mission Australia (Jimmy Keefe and Josh Paton) were the best at getting up on the board which can be a bit tricky to master!

'Let's Go Surfing' provided the coaches and RecLink covered the bill for our session.

The boards were provided by 'Let's Go Surfing.' So were the wetsuits, which was great as even in November the ocean was still only about 19 or 20 degrees! On the other hand, as it was about 24 degrees outside the water, we got rather hot listening to the theory before jumping into the blue!

The waves were small and the water was glassy at the North end of Bondi, perfect for learners who need to catch the white wash and work their way up to paddling onto a wave.

Most everyone was happy to either just catch

the wave on the 8'6" board and ride it like a boogie board and a few tried to "pop" up to stand- which was rather wobbly for most!!

RecLink

RecLink Australia, which sponsored Buck House, provides and promotes over 10,000 sport, recreation and arts activities involving 95,000 participation opportunities to disadvantaged communities throughout Australia each year.

'They work in partnership with community organisations like Flourish Australia to ensure that a diverse range of activities are accessible for Australians experiencing disadvantage.'

<https://www.RecLink.org/get-involved/participate>

Let's Go Surfing

Let's Go Surfing runs lessons and events at Bondi, Maroubra and Byron Bay. They have everything from one off lessons for beginners to six week courses for people who want to take it further. They also hold group sessions and 'Board Meetings' as they call their corporate events!

[https://letsgosurfing.com.au/lessons/bondi/adults/Additional reporting Grant J Everett](https://letsgosurfing.com.au/lessons/bondi/adults/Additional%20reporting%20Grant%20J%20Everett)

ABOVE: Another day at the 'office', inset: Michael is impressed. BELOW: Cheryl Tang of Buck House; Jimmy Keefe and Josh Paton of Mission Australia; Mark Wastie and Krissy Gram of Buck House. PHOTOS: KRISSY GRAM





Flourish Australia Annual General Meeting 2017-18 Change Challenge and Growth

ABOVE: Special guests Brendan and Judi talk to CEO Mark Orr about their experience with Flourish Australia (Full story in Annual Report) PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

By Grant J Everett and Warren Heggarty

also in attendance.

Giving the acknowledgement of people with lived experience of mental health issues, Annie Sykes called upon us all to remember not just those in the past who had 'suffered in silence' and even 'died forgotten' but also 'those who roared' and 'our allies' in the cause.

Chair of the Board Prof Elizabeth Moore AM referred to Stephen Pinker's book *Enlightenment Now* which says that there has never been a better time to be alive than now. He mentioned two elements of our age which detract from that: climate change and the prospect of nuclear war. Elizabeth suggested there was a third: poor mental health.

She noted that this was the tenth year of the establishment of the Women and Children's Program (see story in December Panorama pp.17-19) and pointed out that so many of the issues dealt with there are related to domestic violence, interlinked with mental health issues.

She lauded the fact that our workforce has supported so many people in changing their lives, not by telling them what to do, but by walking alongside them in their journeys.

Once again Elizabeth gave accolades to the board and senior leadership team, with a special mention to new CEO/ Company Secretary Mark Orr and his predecessor Pamela Rutledge, who was

One major feature of the finance report for 2017-2018 was the completion of the Guildford apartment project, of which 6 have been sold and 31 rented. The recent slump in housing prices has not helped our cause, however, the Chair thanked Mohammed Alkhub (General Manager, Business Excellence in his 25th year with our organisation) for his work. 'In a past life I am sure he must have been a Real Estate Agent' she quipped.

Flourish Australia has grown in NSW and Queensland but we have also developed a small presence in Victoria and we are showing interest in South Australia. Headspace Broken Hill and the sub-acute units at Bathurst and Dubbo are examples of some of our new ventures.

Director Rachel Slade has retired from the Board after three years in order to take on the new role of Chief Customer Experience Officer at NAB. The fact that she is taking on such a role in the wake of the Banking Royal Commission is testament to the calibre of our Board Members.

To help us better meet the challenge of the NDIS environment among other things, New finance software has been introduced and has shown great benefit. Because some of our one-on-one services are not necessarily covered by the NDIS, Flourish Australia needs to develop a careful mix of services.

We are extending our marketing, philanthropy and fundraising operations, which will begin to come to fruition in 2018-2019. Elizabeth thanks Peter Neilson, Mark Orr and other team members for their work leading this.

Our peer workforce has grown to 181 and 53% of our workforce overall has identified themselves as having lived experience of a mental health issue. Elizabeth thanked our Community Advisory Council and also the Social Citizenship Think Tank for their thought leadership. And on the subject of thought leadership, the recent publication of the book *Peer Work in Australia* in conjunction with Mind Australia is another highlight of a strong year for peers.

Other matters dealt with included the reappointment of auditors and the re-election of directors on rotation. All current directors were returned with the exception of Rachel Slade whose retirement leaves a casual vacancy. A proposal for remuneration of directors was ratified and an independent remuneration committee was appointed.

Special guest speakers included Brendan and his mother Judi whose stories appeared in the 2017-2018 Annual Report. The keynote speaker was Dr Jeffrey Chan of the NDIS Quality Safeguards Commission. The Commission's job is to set standards for NDIS support services. He told us that after 15 years of studying the restrictive practises used on people with disabilities, he has found restraint to be of zero therapeutic value.

Dr Chan said that restraint was inherently dangerous, citing how a number of people who were being trained in carrying out 'safe restraint techniques' had actually suffered injuries. Staff trained in restraint are more likely to use it. And while the USA, UK and Europe are focussed on reducing these practises, Australia is aiming to eliminate them altogether. He complimented Flourish Australia by saying he was "preaching to the converted".

Read more about Dr Chan's speech on pages 12 and 13 of this issue. Want to see Dr Chan's keynote speech? Check out the 2018 Annual General Meeting on our Facebook page and skip to the 53:20 mark.

Community Advisory Council and Co-Design



ABOVE: From left to right, Mark Orr (CEO) Mozzzy Wilkinson (Chair, Parkes) Shane Bentley (Nowra), Dean Linley (Young), Graham Seaman (Emeritus mbr Armidale), Caroline Dunlop (Emeritus mbr Bourke), Scott Gourlay (Taree, Deputy Chair) Matt Stonier (Emeritus mbr, Figtree), Phil O'Laughlin, Heidi Chan (Harris Park), David Sharp (Flowerdale, Liverpool), Simon Swinton (Hunter, back), Kim Donaldson (Bega, front), Debra Knight (Embark at Blacktown), Aaron Stevenson (Broken Hill), Matt Franks (Tamworth), Karen Prestwidge (Emeritus mbr, now peer worker), Kim Jones (Project Officer, Inclusion) Donna (Mozzy's wife) and Fay Jackson (General Manager Inclusion). Not pictured Deonny Zaroual (Figtree) PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Warren Heggarty

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) met for two days on November 13th and 14th 2018

Two new members of the committee were introduced; Debra Knight of Embark Cottage replaces Karen Prestwidge who is now a peer worker, and Normal Field from Marrickville.

The main theme of this session was 'co-design.' In a nutshell 'co-design' is a method of living up to the old slogan 'nothing about us without us.' It's the opposite of 'tokenism.' In the past, services for people with mental health issues have largely been devised and run by people who do not have lived experience of their own. Over time, people have begun to see that services work better if the people they are meant to benefit are actually involved in ALL stages of creating them. From the initial idea to the ongoing execution. Co-design was the topic of one of the presentations that Flourish Australia made to the 2018 TheMHS Conference.

Another thing that was discussed was terms of reference for a working group to set up 'local champion committees.' There was a session for feedback on the culture of Flourish Australia and

the quality of its services. Statements of quality and culture were evaluated: 'We strive for excellence,' 'we communicate honestly,' 'we care,' 'we lead and innovate in mental health' and 'we are one team.'

As well as Mark Orr, several other members of Flourish Australia's Senior Leadership Team also made presentations to the council. They included Andrew O'Brien (General Manager, Operations) Peter Neilson (Chief Commercial Officer) and James Herbertson (General Manager, Employment Services).

Emeritus

A number of long-standing members of the council were required by the constitution to retire on rotation after this meeting to enable new members to join in. The CEO Mark Orr presented these Emeritus members of the council with certificates of appreciation after at the end of proceedings.

Here are some of the things that were said at that presentation.

Caroline thanked Mark and the other members of the Flourish Australia senior leadership who initiated the CAC three years ago. 'Thank you Mark, we have

come to trust you as a friend.'

Dean observed that from day one 'we were treated with more respect than I had expected... we were working on policies from the second meeting... I've never known any service to do something like that.' He was grateful for 'the confidence that the board and the senior leadership team has in us. I think that in future this council will have even MORE impact on how Flourish Australia grows.

Mozzy (Chair) said that the way Flourish Australia has given the opportunity for people who access the services to have a say in how the services operate is a precedent that should be followed by other organisations and businesses.

'It's getting treated as equals' said Phil. Karen Prestwidge (an emeritus CAC member who is now a peer worker) told everyone at the gathering 'you guys have so much to give... I feel honoured to have met such a "pot of gold."'

Kim said I can already see a change among the new members after two meetings!

In March 2019 there will be elections to replace the next group of retiring, long-standing CAC representatives.

All inclusive Co-Design

By Michael Wren*

My term on the Community Advisory Council finished in November 2017. Recently, at the 2018 Annual General Meeting I met Mozzey Wilkinson, the new chair of the CAC. Talking to him, I think that there is a bright future ahead for the CAC.

In early 2018, Fay Jackson, Flourish Australia's General Manager, Inclusion, asked me if I would like to take part in a presentation on Co-Design in Adelaide at the TheMHS conference. We had some meetings with Jade Ryall and others to prepare a workshop.

When I was at TheMHS in Adelaide I noticed that the way Flourish Australia works is so far ahead of the other organisations. Mainly I think it is because Flourish Australia listens to the people who access the service, and because they employ people with lived experience as well.

At the workshop we started off by introducing the topic of co-design. Then we broke up into groups, with a team member on each. Everyone did activities which were designed to show how co-design works. I think at the end

of the workshop the people who participated all understood what co-design was and what it meant.

An example of co-design which I have been involved in is the Social Citizenship Think Tank. In this group, everybody is having input and it is all taken on board. Different people with different backgrounds need to be included and heard in order to get the best answer to a question.

I think that Flourish Australia really understands what it is like for people with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Before my involvement with Flourish Australia I didn't even fully realise how I was being discriminated against because of my issues. The real estate agent wanted to evict me at one stage, but Flourish advocated for me and said that you can't treat a person like that! Because of that advocacy, the real estate agent changed its way and since then we have all gotten along really well.

I finally got an NDIS package after being uncertain due to the HASI being taken



ABOVE: Michael Wren, Matt Salen, Fay Jackson, Kim Jones and Jade Ryall in Adelaide in August last year.

away. So I still access Flourish Australia's service at Bathurst. Lisa Harrison helped me out with that. She's the best!

I was able to arrange transport last year using my NDIS package. I would not have been able to do that under HASI. So although it's not perfect, the NDIS has enabled me to do things I was unable to do before!

I'm looking forward to the next Social Citizenship Think Tank and to studying for a Certificate IV in Mental Health (Peer Work).

**As told to Warren Heggarty*

BELOW: 'Different people with different backgrounds need to be included and heard in order to get the best answer to a question', says Emeritus CAC member Michael Wren. PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY





ABOVE: Some of the team (from left) Jannah Chandler, Patricia D., Mark Anacki, Nancy Begley, Li Ern Soo, Fiona Thistlethwaite and Sue O'Rourke at Rosehill Gardens Racecourse on the evening of the awards. PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE O'ROURKE

Figtree Conference Centre wins Inclusion Award

Figtree Conference Centre, a social enterprise of Flourish Australia, won the 2018 Western Sydney Award for Business Excellence in the category of Excellence in Workplace Inclusion. The other nominees in this category were Ronald McDonald House and Kurrajong Kitchen.

The difference with Figtree Conference Centre is that every event hosted here contributes to positive social outcomes by creating a work culture where those on their mental health recovery journey can thrive.

The Figtree team received their award at a gala event hosted by the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce on 21st of September. Team members who were able to attend on the night included

Patricia Dell'Olio (Peer Worker), Mark Anacki, Nancy Begley, Li Ern Soo, Jannah Chandler and Deonny Zaroual (Conference Centre Assistants), Fiona Thistlethwaite (Conference Centre Assistant Supervisor) and Sue O'Rourke (Venue Coordinator).

The keynote speaker was The Hon Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of New South Wales. Other guests included former Leader of the Opposition Luke Foley and 700 representatives of the Western Sydney business community.

Founded in 1990 by the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, "the Awards Gala annually recognises outstanding business leaders and organisations who are actively contributing to Western Sydney's rapidly developing economy." (WSABE) The WSABE received "roughly 300 entries of an exceptional standard, (so) each and every winner should be proud of their accomplishments."

Featherdale Wildlife Park won WSABE's most prestigious award, the Commonwealth Bank Business of the Year.

The aim of the WSABE is to serve as "a meeting point for businesses in Western

Sydney and build towards its objectives of establishing a more unified and prosperous Western Sydney business community."

About Figtree Conference Centre

Figtree Conference Centre is located at 5 Figtree Drive, Sydney Olympic Park and centrally located to the business hubs of Parramatta, Rhodes, North Ryde and the Sydney CBD. We have 70 free on-site parking spaces available for Figtree Conference Centre customers. On street parking and paid parking at the P2 parking station at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre and the P3 parking station on Sarah Durack Avenue is also available.

If you are interested in booking with Figtree Conference Centre, you can make an enquiry online by going to figtreecc.org.au/contact-us or you can email figtree@flourishaustralia.org.au or call us on 02 9393 9051. Our office hours are 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

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Sabrina: How HASI Can Help

ABOVE: Mental Health Worker Sabrina Loiseaux PHOTO BY CIARAN MAHONY (TEAM LEADER HASI)

By Sabrina Loiseaux

I've been employed as a Mental Health Worker at Flourish Australia's Marrickville service for over a year now, but I've been with the organisation since 2013. I work with the people who access Marrickville's HASI (Housing Accommodation and Support Initiative) program, a service tailored towards people with a history of mental health issues, particularly those who may need a little more support.

How we can help

The HASI program assists people to lead a life that they feel is meaningful. A person might require support accessing open employment, returning to studies, connecting with their local community, or improving their living skills. The exact goals and details always differ from person to person, but whatever they want to achieve, the HASI program can help. For instance, we could support somebody to establish themselves in their local community by linking them up with groups that match their interests, and we've been implementing a lot of different groups to build on a variety of essential skills. We can even assist individuals in applying for NDIS support to ensure the NDIA supplies them with an appropriate support package that meets their particular needs.

The power is yours

Everyone who accesses the HASI program keeps track of their goals with a tailored Individual Recovery Plan that reminds them of what they're working towards. We constantly update and refer to the IRPs to make sure the participants have a voice, a choice and control over what they want and need from life. They tell us what they need, not the other way around!

"It's easy to focus on the bad times, and this can blind you from the good stuff."

We are here, I guess, to foster and enhance their sense of hope, to help them identify their strengths and wants in life. Sometimes it is difficult for the people we work with to recognise their past achievements, but we do all we can to help them identify what worked for them before and where they would like to head in the future.

Strength in numbers

As mental health issues can potentially be very isolating, we also support people with their social lives. We provide opportunities to exercise their social skills with group activities where they can go out and do fun things together. I'm particularly pleased with how the Tuesday community café group at Glebe is going, as it's become a place where people are

enthusiastic in establishing new relationships. It's an opportunity to share their journeys and current difficulties with people who deal with the same kinds of struggles. For them, it's become a beautiful way not to feel so isolated. We have different groups running most of the week, like the fishing group on Mondays, visiting The Pantry on Wednesdays, Thursday is Cooking class, Art groups are on Saturdays, and finally the Womens' group and Coffee Club on Sunday.

We're sure to spice up our routine with special events. Just yesterday, instead of attending the community café we visited West Side Chapel in Kings Cross. It's such a vibrant and colourful place and everybody made us feel very welcome. West Side Chapel is run by lots of volunteers who are happy to answer questions, and they even provided us with a free lunch. The feedback from the group was very positive, especially when it came to how welcome they felt. Most of the group wants to go back and visit on a regular basis.

Sharing the load

Sometimes we can face situations that are quite difficult. For instance, someone might be experiencing financial hardship, and they might not have enough food in the fridge. In such situations we would help them to create connections with services that provide free meals. We could also support individuals to develop their budgeting skills. We want to make sure that whenever we aren't available to lend a hand that the people we support can access the resources they need that are available in the community.

Does this interest you?

To access our HASI service you need to be receiving support from NSW Health. We partner with NSW Housing to support people to maintain their housing.

We run HASI from 8 in the morning until 8 at night, 7 days per week.

Flourish Australia
6a Rich Street,
Marrickville, NSW 2204
(02) 9393 9382
Weekdays 8am to 4pm



Young People's Program Freestyle from Brumby House

ABOVE: Brumby House resident Joel in training PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

By Warren Heggarty

It was RUOK day and Joel who accesses Flourish Australia's Young People's Program at Emu Plains was making a debut as a rapper in the main street of St Marys. It featured on Flourish Australia's Facebook page at the time. His rap was, of course, right on message. Having experienced mental health issues himself, Joel knows the importance of spruiking, or rather rapping for the cause.

'My mental health is a lot better now than it was even four or five months ago. I'm now living on my own and that has been beneficial. Sometimes I like to have my own space. It's good to have the right balance between "me-time" and socialising.'

Socialising includes the recent Youth Formal, which Joel and many of the young

people in Flourish Australia's youth services were a part of. 'I regret not going to a high school graduation' he admits. Since his appearance in St Marys, Joel has been recording his freestyle raps and posting them on-line. 'I am planning to get a job.' He says. Will rap be a part of that? 'I'm currently looking at an online music business studies course.'

'One great thing about it is that now that I have moved into my own place I can do the things that I want to do. I find it easier to get motivated to do those things.'

Previously, however, Joel was a resident for a couple of years at the YPP service at Emu Plains, known as Brumby House. While he was there he managed to write a story about it which might shed some light on how far he has come. Today he admits that the 'physical activities were

What is the Young People's Program and who could benefit from it?

The Young People's Program (a.k.a. Brumby House) is located at Emu Heights, which is near Penrith NSW at the foot of the Blue Mountains to the West of Sydney. It offers a 12 month program supporting young men living with mental health and or drug and alcohol issues.

According to manager Adelle Salter 'We offer a safe environment in a recovery based residential home setting free from alcohol and drugs. We acknowledge that relapse is part of recovery and work in collaboration with both local area mental health services and our local area drug and alcohol support service NYDAS.' 'We view ourselves as a step up program,' says Adelle, 'where you can come to us, get into a daily routine of taking care of yourself and your home, make new friends and access the community. You can work towards your individual recovery goals with the vision of empowerment from independence, leading the best quality life without limitations.'

Brumby house is for young people who have been diagnosed with a mental health issue, who are not acutely unwell or suicidal and do not have serious violence or aggression issues. They need to have a capacity to achieve independence, a willingness to address any current drug/alcohol issues and have a reasonable level of self care. They need to be willing to participate in the rehabilitation program and daily activities and be between 17 and 25 years old. Brumby operates from 8:00am – 10:00pm Monday to Friday and usually from 11:30am – 8:00pm on weekends and public holidays.

hard' and it has been hard to carry them over into life beyond Brumby House. But he gave it ago! These days meditation and yoga help with keeping control.'

Opposite is the story from 2017 so you can gauge how far Joel has come.

My recovery story

By Joel

My name is Joel and this is my recovery story. After completing my Higher School Certificate at the age of 17 in 2012, I pretty much spent the next six months playing Xbox with my friends. Around the time I turned 18 one of my mates encouraged me to smoke some marijuana with him. While I'd never done this before, I loved how pot made me feel, so when the opportunity came to have some more a month or so later, I immediately said yes. This quickly became an everyday routine, even though at times it made me feel terrible. I continued to smoke pot anyway, and I soon built up a tolerance.

This same mate introduced me to a new circle of friends who I could use drugs with, and I took all sorts of things with them. I would also mix pot with every new drug I tried. Eventually I had a crazy bad addiction to marijuana where I'd have to use it every couple of hours. I'd spend all my time just hanging out with my mates in my parent's garage listening to music and getting high all day. I didn't see it as a bad thing at the time, but now I know that drugs can give you mental health issues.

The main problem with pot was that it made me feel so lazy and unmotivated, even more than usual! I believe pot

played a big role in my mental health issues, especially as I was smoking enormous amounts every day. There were other stressful things happening, too. As my depression and trust issues got worse, I just wanted to be alone. I isolated myself for months. I managed to quit using all drugs by cutting off all contact with any friends who used. Although I wasn't on pot anymore, I started to smoke a lot more cigarettes. I also ate a lot more and gained weight.

My mental health issues began to make me think my family were trying to annoy me on purpose. One day I lost control of my temper in response to this and smashed my parent's glass sliding door. I was asked to move out, and I went to live with my grandparents. Although I hadn't used any drugs for almost a year by this point, soon this the cycle began again. After a month or so of using drugs again, including prescription drugs I once again lost control of my temper and destroyed everything in my room. My grandparents were forced to call the police.

The police placed me in the mental health unit at Nepean hospital, and this turned out to be a very positive thing. I finally started to get better. I met some awesome people while I was there, including someone who is now one of my best mates. I obviously couldn't use any drugs in the mental health unit, but I was surprised to find that I didn't crave for them anyway.

When I moved out of the hospital after three months I chose to live at Brumby House, a youth service run by Flourish Australia. I soon made a few close mates around my age and spent lots of time

with them. To live at Brumby House you need to do activities according to your schedule each weekday. In my case, I attended weekly appointments with a psychologist, and I also took part in groups where we learned about things like life skills, history, bullying, and the effects of drugs, among other things. I also increased my physical and mental health by attending the gym, going for long walks and swimming.

The young people who live at Brumby get to choose a special activity on Saturdays. This can be anything we want, like going to Wet 'n' Wild or the movies. It gets us out of the house and helps us bond as friends. This supports us mentally, allowing us to recover more each day.

I loved living at Brumby House. With the encouragement of the staff, I've learned how to look after myself, such as how to cook, clean, do laundry and use public transport. I can go out anywhere now without being anxious or stressed out, and I haven't badly lost control of my temper in more than a year. Their drug-and-alcohol program showed me how to have fun with friends without being under the influence. I'm happily drug-free, and I like my life this way. I still have a social drink occasionally, but that's about it.

As my depression and anxiety are getting better, now I'm attending fortnightly appointments with my job provider. My life is slowly but surely heading in the right direction, and it feels good to have everything back on track. I've got a few good friends now, and I'm happy with how everything is. I'm recovering very well from my not-so-good-past.



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Rising above it all!!!

Poem created by Lesley-Anne
who accesses Flourish Australia's
Goulburn service

**No ifs or buts,
You're not going nuts,
So get out of that rut,
And tell the world what you're
about...
Don't be a number in a file,
Create a life that's worthwhile,
One that leaves you with a
smile...
Be busy,
But not to the extent,
That you get too dizzy...
Get some inspiration,
That will enrich your
motivation,
Then you can enjoy your
recreation...
Follow the sun,
Go for a run,
And have some fun...**

Young People's Formal Project



CLARIFICATION

A reader kindly pointed out to us that we needed to clarify some of the details of titles and geography in the story "Young People's Formal Project" which appeared on page 45 of December 2018 Panorama.

Tyler Smith (on the right of the pic), who introduced the project at the Mental Health Month Business Breakfast late last year is of course a Peer Worker for the YCLSS Western Sydney Team, not a young person who accesses the service as stated. Elizabeth Harlow (on the left of the pic) who also spoke at the breakfast is the Manager for YCLSS in Western Sydney, based at Seven Hills, not Penrith as stated

Panorama is sorry for any misunderstandings or inconvenience caused by these oversights.



ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #1: Housing and Home

Keeping Important Documents

By Warren Heggarty

We recently heard a story about how two people went in search of the will from a recently deceased family member. This late family member had been very fastidious and insisted on keeping EVERY bill and every important letter that had come to the house since the 1960s. That included everything from the deeds of the family home to a pile of Television rental accounts! They ended up finding the Will all right –not to mention a few other important documents- but they had had to make a day of it! When the dust (literally) settled, there was quite a bit of paperwork to be recycled.

This sort of experience can make you a little worried about throwing out documents. So what documents does an individual REALLY need to hang onto? For most documents, there are not really any hard and fast rules about how long to keep them. With some (like Tax documents) we can be guided by legal requirements, but everyone's circumstances are different and we usually have to make our own decision about when to turf things.

Why keep things at all?

Documents like the title deeds of a house, wills and insurance policies and other contracts should be kept in a safe place while they are in force, which in some cases might be forever!

According to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) Keeping good records helps you and your tax adviser to provide written evidence that ensures you are able to claim all your entitlements. It helps reduce the risk of disputes and avoids 'exposure to penalties.'

Generally, the ATO says, you must keep your written evidence for five years

from the date you lodge your tax return- sometimes longer in the case of dispute settlements and so forth. Full information is available on the ATO's web site. (ATO)

Some sources still advise you keep documents for seven years (probably due to the legal statute of limitations).

The only reason for keeping old bills is if you want to compare them over a period of time for budgeting, or if there is a dispute with the supplier. Other than that, old bills may well be cluttering your place up, especially if you have retained the newsletters and special offer flyers that came with them. The digital age means less paper... although sometimes It's hard to believe.

Receipts for large purchases should be kept until the warranty runs out (unless tax is involved in which case it is five years).

Old Stuff

These days, instruction manuals for electronic equipment are usually on line. If you are hanging on to an instruction manual for a 1976 monophonic cassette player, you probably don't need to hang onto it. Unless you still have the cassette player, in which case it probably still works and will be of great value to someone who has a cassette collection.

Some medical records might be useful to keep, especially if you have had major procedures or have a chronic condition that could recur. Receipts and accounts and old appointment cards are no longer useful!

Keep records relating to your car for reference for a couple of years after you have disposed of the car. You can claim on your insurance even though the period of coverage has passed. This means that if someone makes a claim against you for an incident that has happened in the past, you can still claim this against your policy for that year.

It's online

Bank statements are really unnecessary because you can look up all your



transactions via net banking. Superannuation statements are really in the same category as bank statements. Keeping the hard copy is really doubling up on what is already available on line. Paper pay slips also cause clutter. According to Jane of Sort This there is no point keeping pay slips beyond seven years because you can't make claims beyond that time due to the statute of limitations. Flourish Australia, of course, has been using electronic pay advice and group certificates for several years now.

Carly Jacobs of RealCommercial.com.au recommends you throw out your old university text books and 'sub-par' assignments (Jacobs, 2016). If you were a good student however, you still read your old texts for pleasure and you are keeping your High Distinction essays to show your grandkids, aren't you? They will MARVEL at how assignments were done on paper in the old days.

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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #2: Meals and Shopping

Food that KEEPS: Saving your money, saving your health, saving the planet

By Grant J Everett

Eating healthy can often mean eating cheaply. Cutting down on unhealthy, calorie-rich junk, fatty meats and sweetened dairy while increasing your fresh vegetable and fresh fruit intake is a great way to reduce your grocery bills while doing your body a favour.

One drawback to healthy, fresh, natural foodstuffs that aren't loaded with the salt, fat and sugar of garbage snacks is that they tend to have a much shorter use-by date. So while eating right is usually associated with making more frequent trips to the supermarket, you can keep a variety of healthy food for quite a bit of time if you store them under the right conditions.

As Australians throw away an incredible amount of food each year, it is also essential that you plan your meals. For instance, if you want chicken on Thursday, plan accordingly with when you purchase it. Allowing food to go bad is like tossing money into the bin, but with a little forethought you could save hundreds of dollars every year.

Here are some foods that are great for your body, and will keep for ages.

Foods to keep in a cool, dry, dark place

- Nuts: High in protein, fat and fibre. Keep them in the shell
- Canned meats: Protein
- Canned seafood: Protein and omega-3 fatty acids
- Dried grains: Gluten-free grains include rice, buckwheat and certain oats. Keep them airtight
- Dark chocolate: Fibre, magnesium and more
- Canned fruits and vegetables: Fermented, pickled, or preserved in airtight containers
- Dried fruit: Fibre and other



PHOTO BY WARREN HEGARTY

- nutrients, but high in sugar and calories
- Beans: Among the most nutritious of foods, loaded with protein, fibre and minerals like magnesium. Canned beans last a lot longer than dried beans
- Jerky: Any meat can be turned into high-protein jerky and stored in airtight packaging
- Protein powders, like whey protein: Great for smoothies.
- Dehydrated milk powder

Meat isn't the enemy, but steering away from fatty cuts, cooking in less oil and serving smaller portions with heaps of fresh veggies can make a big difference to nutrition. Cutting back on sauces and gravies will cut back on the calories.

- Pumpkin and sweet potatoes. Store them in a single layer to keep them fresh
- Rice
- Peanut butter. Stir before use.
- Onions
- Dry pasta: Whole wheat or vegetable pasta has the highest nutritional content
- Canned vegetable juice
- Garlic bulbs

Foods to refrigerate in the crisper

- Cabbage: Use in place of lettuce in salads and sandwiches
- Apples: Eat the larger ones first, as they will spoil quicker
- Carrots: Put a paper towel inside their bag to absorb moisture and keep them fresh
- Oranges: Store with peels on

Recommended portion sizes

- Carbs like potatoes, rice, pasta and legumes: One clenched fist.
- Fruits, nuts and seeds: One cupped hand.
- Vegetables and greens: Two cupped hands.
- Meats and eggs: Size and thickness of your palm.
- Cheese, spreads and dressings: One thumb.

Sources:
"22 Healthy Foods That Don't Spoil Easily"
www.healthline.com/nutrition/22-healthy-foods-that-dont-spoil#section1
"19 healthy foods that last a really long time", Anna Newell Jones
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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #3 Looking After The Home



PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Warren Heggarty

There are a gazillion expert homemakers on the net who can give you lists of 5, 10, 20 or even 27 rules on how to keep your place clean and tidy. But surely there is a Mum or Dad blogger out there who can achieve it all with only ONE rule to make it simple for us?

Panorama found two such domestic geniuses: Marcy and Morgan. Here are their secrets...

- At least once a day, spend at least 15 uninterrupted minutes cleaning (Morgan, 2017)
- Finish what you start (Marcy, 2018)

Of course, you can only use one of those rules at a time, because if you run them together you'll need to finish everything in 15 minutes, increasing the likelihood that you will short-circuit.

So instead of one RULE, how about one MINUTE? This is what Melanie of **Life Hacks** suggested:

"It takes less than a minute to file a bill you just paid, put a read newspaper in the recycling bin, or hang up an article of clothing." (Pinola, 2012)

Marla from **Real Simple** suggests keeping your cleaning supplies on hand all the time so if you need to spring

into action for one (or two) minutes of cleaning you don't waste any precious seconds hunting down sponges or mops or detergent etc (Christiansen, 2018).

To make this scientific, Panorama collected a set of rules culled from various blogs. We asked our participants to choose one and one only of these tips, the one that would make more difference than any other would.

1. Make your bed every day
2. Always load your dishwasher at the end of the day
3. Tidy bathroom vanity after use
4. Use organisers and stackable containers for storage
5. Use baskets and/or drawers in your hallway
6. Have a lightweight vacuum cleaner
7. Start a system to organise paperwork
8. Empty your bin often
9. Keep a cleaning cloth in each room
10. Add indoor plants to your home
11. Do one load of laundry per day
12. Be happy with "clean enough"
13. Prioritize
14. Get the whole family/household involved
15. Do a 15-minute nightly clean-up
16. Never leave a room empty handed (take stuff back to where it belongs)
17. Declutter
18. Concentrate on high traffic areas
19. Clean as you go (Moore, 2018) (Jenn, 2015)

Of these 19, only four were selected by our voters. The clear winner on 42 per cent was "clean as you go" followed by a three-way tie on 14 per cent each for "do a 15 minute clean every night", "open the windows and doors", and "a place for everything". The remaining two selections ("never leave a room empty handed" and "declutter") scored below 10 per cent.

In case you are wondering about opening windows and doors, June explained that you need adequate light and air. Doris echoed this and added that putting on some "boppy" music will help you stage a cleaning blitz. This will be even easier if all of your household items belong to a special home of their own, so as not to clutter the place up.

We received so many great suggestions (about hygiene too!) that we will be following this story up in a future issue of ACTION Recovery Conversations. Readers should not be shy about sharing their own wisdom too, for future issues.

So, will you clean as you go? It's up to you, readers, but one thing is sure, when something needs doing, it never hurts to do it here and do it now!

Thanks to all the Flourish Australia people who took part in our survey.

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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #4: Looking After Myself

Are diet soft drinks *really* a better option?

by Grant J Everett

Did you know “soft” drinks originally got their name by being seen as a safe alternative to alcohol (“hard” drinks)? Another fun fact is that many early soft drinks were sold for medicinal purposes in the 19th Century, with Coca Cola marketed as a brain and nerve tonic that was claimed to be able to increase your intelligence (K Eschner, 2017).

We’re now well past the point of pretending that soft drinks are good for you in any way. First off, unless you’re drinking a Light or Diet variety, soft drinks contain massive amounts of refined sugar and empty calories. They have zero nutritional value, which means drinking them will only take up space in your stomach that would be better allocated to a more worthwhile drink/meal/snack.

The World Health Organisation recommends a maximum intake of 6 teaspoons of added sugar in our diet per day, but the optimal amount of added sugar in our diets should (ideally) be zero. A single can of cola contains MORE than 9 teaspoons of sugar, so a single 375mL can will immediately put you over your daily limit. A 600mL bottle of full-strength Coca-Cola contains 17 teaspoons of sugar and 240 calories without any nutritional value, and it would take the average adult more than an hour of walking to burn it off again.

Despite the terrible reputation of added sugar, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australians are consuming more of the white stuff than ever before. ABS numbers show we take in an average of 14 teaspoons (60 grams) of refined sugar per day, with teenage males consuming the most added sugar at 18 teaspoons (92 grams) a day. It is feared that the next generation will not outgrow these bad habits, leading to a lifetime of poor diet, obesity and illnesses like diabetes and heart

issues (M Dannie 2017). It’s even worse in America: according to Euromonitor, the average person in the United States consumes more than 25 teaspoons, or 126 grams, of added sugar per day. That’s the equivalent of drinking more than three cans of full-strength cola (McFarland, 2016).

Where does all this sugar come from? The data showed a third of our sugar intake comes from “extra” foods and beverages, with soft drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, and fruit and vegetable juices making up a third of the added sugar in our diet, and we get another 9 percent from the usual suspects: confectionery, cakes and muffins. So while 60 grams (or 14 teaspoons) of sugar may sound like an obscene amount to scoff, it’s really not that difficult to do. For example, a large fruit juice can contain a day’s worth of sugar in one big cup.

Is fake better?

Sugar-free and calorie-free soft drinks rely on artificial sweeteners to be palatable. While this keeps down their calorie content and is a far better choice than scoffing 9 teaspoons of sugar, according to Harvard University, consuming artificial sweeteners can cause changes in your brain concerning how you taste foods, and this is thought to lead us to craving sweeter and sweeter choices over time. However, the long-term effects of consuming large quantities of artificial sweeteners is still unknown, despite what the current rumours are.

The OTHER chemical in cola

Many soft drinks (especially colas) contain caffeine. Caffeine reduces feelings of tiredness while boosting your physical and cognitive performance. While it is considered to be safe in moderate amounts, caffeine’s diuretic effects will cause you to urinate more often, dehydrating you in the process. Too much caffeine can make you feel anxious, jittery or nauseous, and lead to trouble sleeping. The bitterness of caffeine is another reason that colas need so much sugar (or sweetener) to be drinkable, as caffeine is very bitter, especially in large amounts. It’s also addictive.

Summary

For the purposes of hydration, soft drinks and other beverages that contain lots of sugar or caffeine will never be as effective at curing your thirst as water. If you regularly crave for soft drink, try to gradually reduce your intake by slowly replacing it with healthier alternatives, like sugarfree iced tea, water with a twist of lemon, or a diet sodastream option. Be sure to drink H2O for the majority of your fluid intake. Everything in moderation!

A useful tip: when you feel like a Coke, have a glass of water first.

“Coca-Cola’s Creator Said the Drink Would Make You Smarter”, Kat Eschner, 29th of March 2016

www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/coca-colas-creator-said-drink-would-make-you-smarter-180962665/#TkGft-dX3cRz5370Q.99

“Are There Any Health Benefits for Soda?”, Marie Dannie, October 3rd 2017,

www.livestrong.com/article/493032-are-there-any-health-benefits-for-soda/

eatingdisordersaustralia.org.au/new-abs-data-reveals-much-sugar-australians-really-consume/

“21 Ways Drinking Soda Is Bad for Your Health”, Elisha McFarland, Food and Health, July 25, 2016

foodrevolution.org/blog/food-and-health/soda-health-risks/

“Diet Soda: Good or Bad?”, Elise Mandl BSc APD, May 1st 2018

www.healthline.com/nutrition/diet-soda-good-or-bad



Why read minds when you can communicate?



By Warren Heggarty

One of the biggest causes of misunderstanding in the world is mind-reading. Not everybody has had the same life experiences as we have, which means that our attempts at mind reading often miss the target.

Actually, most people probably think there is no such thing as mind reading (maybe there isn't!) but everyone does it, and it leads to trouble every day. Most commonly we suppose that we know exactly what is going on in someone else's head. We assume that the fellow creeping round the side of our house is up to no good, spying on us. Yet if we observed him carefully, we would discover that he has come to read the electricity meter which is covered up by a large plant that we recently placed there.

Mind-reading other people can be a problem, but expecting other people to be able to read OUR minds can be worse. We often just EXPECT people to know what we are thinking, or what we want or how we feel. But if we haven't actually TOLD them, how are they to know? Unless they actually CAN read our minds. In which case they wouldn't keep getting it wrong...

The good thing about NOT mind reading is that it forces you to open up a channel of communication and actually ASK the person what is on their mind. And allow them to ask what is on your mind. (Boissiere)

If mind reading is opening the door to misunderstanding, feeling certain about our opinions is opening a trap door into the abyss. A little bit of mind-reading might not be harmful. As long as we limit our assumptions to fairly obvious things and as long as we don't believe our guesses are infallible.

When we know people or situations well enough, it is helpful guess how they will react to something or what they would think of us if they found out we did such and such. However it is usually very unhelpful to assume that our guesses are 100% correct. This is where we slip up because sometimes our guesses are 0% correct.

It may be that you have never made a mistake about anything in your life, but most of the rest of us make lots of mistakes. The older we get the more we are able to reflect on how wrong we were when we were younger. Not that we are right about anything NOW. We just realise that we are capable of being

wrong. (Neuman, 2013)

Someone who has been abducted by Aliens might find the skepticism of unbelievers a little annoying. So too, the person who has never seen any evidence of life on other planets might consider alien abduction victims to be deluded.

Nevertheless it is possible to agree to disagree and not to get into a fight over it. Think about how the other person might have come to the outrageous conclusion that aliens do not exist, or the equally outrageous conclusion that they do exist. Not everybody has had the same life experiences as we have.

Feeling certain that another person can read our minds, or that we can read other people's minds requires us to be cautious on two counts. Firstly, most people don't believe in mind reading. Secondly, many people have been certain about things that have later been discovered to be false.

Aristotle's error

Aristotle, that great thinker who tutored Alexander the Great, for example, had a theory that mosquitoes spontaneously generated from the water of swamps. He had no idea they hatched from eggs and went through metamorphosis, because he had never spent enough time lurking round swamps to make the connection between the various life stages of mosquitoes. Aristotle may have been the smartest person in the world, but even he came up with some clangers.

Perhaps if he had spoken to some peasants down by the swamp he may have learned about the life cycle of mozzies. But it seems he put too much faith in the workings of human reason and not enough in communication. Communication, that is, listening to others, will help us develop better relationships no matter how right or wrong our ideas may be.

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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #8: Mental Wellbeing



Music to our ears: how creative expression is great for your overall wellbeing

Chloe Hancock is the Manager of Flourish Australia's New Outlook down at Wollongong. She spoke to Panorama about how creative expression, such as through music, art and creative writing, can work wonders for recovery.

By Chloe Hancock

Music can act as a pathway to recovery, which is one reason why New Outlook has a big music area stocked with lots of instruments. Heaps of people come all week to practise guitar or piano with their headphones on, and we also have jamming sessions on Fridays where the whole community gets together to rock out. Friday is also karaoke and open mic night.

The New Outlook Band gets together every Wednesday to practise for their next upcoming gig. They've performed in Mackay Park and Crown Street Mall, at the local events held for mental health month each year, as well as the Cultural Celebration days we hold at

New Outlook every month. We also run music lessons for our other members on Wednesday, too.

We motivate people to reach for their creativity goals, as well as any other goals they might have in relation to performance or other expressive kinds of art. A number of people who access our services have told us that it's their goal to perform music in public, and some of our musicians go out busking. One band member, Dave, is able to attend open mic nights at a local hotel on Thursdays because of the support he receives from a Flourish Australia worker.

Expressing towards independence

But our members don't need us to do everything for them when it comes to self-development or creative expression. Take John, for instance: he plays the piano and the flute, and he wanted to be able to practise on a full pipe organ (not the most common of instruments). He met with some representatives from Town Hall on his own bat, told them he accesses Flourish Australia services, and reminded them how they've worked with us in the past. As a result, not only did he negotiate to be able to use their pipe organ, but they allow him to use it for free. John had the same conversation with an Anglican church just down the

road, so now he can practise there, too.

When John plays a pipe organ, it brings a real vibrancy to the space. These were great outcomes.

Creating your own recovery

We do a lot of creative recovery planning focussed around artistic expression. So rather than just filling out questions on a form, a person might write a song about their recovery, or create a piece of artwork that demonstrates their journey. As expressing yourself artistically has all kinds of amazing benefits, it's something we encourage.

We also run art activities that have therapeutic outcomes. At the moment we have workers from Art Peace Projects coming in as a partner program. We get out the supplies materials and APP comes in to run things.

New Outlook DES
3 Station Street, Wollongong,
NSW 2500
(02) 9393 9156
Open weekdays 8AM to 4PM

BELOW: The New Outlook drum kit, just one small piece of their music room

PHOTO BY GRANT EVERETT



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Recovery Conversation Theme #9: Health Information



The truth about visiting the dentist: It's fun

ACTION demolishes all common arguments against visiting the dentist.

By Warren Heggarty, recovering dentalphobe

I'll give you my own story. After fifteen years of hard drinking, chain smoking and not visiting the dentist, I was riddled with infected and broken down teeth. After years of ignoring the pain of dental abscesses (one of the most painful things you can have) because I was terrified of the dentist, I developed a really bad infection in the middle of the night. The doctor said that it was so bad I was likely to develop blood poisoning (sepsis) and that it could be fatal. He actually went to the (closed) dentist's office next door and made an appointment for me!

Fortunately I responded to the penicillin within hours, but I was crook for a week. Over 25 weekly or twice weekly visits I worked my way up from sitting in the dentist's chair through small fillings, to root canal to a two and a half hour surgical extraction requiring stitches and post operative antibiotics.

By the end of that, I kind of enjoyed

going to the dentist, in a sick way. Better still, I was able to smile.

Now that I have gotten your attention, I want to assure you that YOU TOO can have an oral epiphany like mine. Below are refutations of the most common arguments we use to get out of going to the dentist.

I can't afford it

Private dentistry: The full cost of dental treatment is spectacular. I have had about 15 'root canals' done over the years at between \$1500 and \$2000 a pop. You might think I'm lucky, because I have private health insurance, but often I only get a third or maybe two thirds refunded and the rest comes out of my pocket. It's not cheap. However, I have learned to prioritise my health over many other things such as fast cars, gambling, beer (quit) and cigarettes (quit). The knowledge that I can go to the dentist of my choice when and where I like is more valuable to me than any of these things.

One of the cheapest procedures believe it or not, is also the most radical: an extraction. However, while an extraction might allow you to get things over and done with quickly, it's not necessarily the best choice. Dentists prefer to save your teeth. It's healthier.

Public dentistry: State governments provide free public oral health care (i.e., dentistry) to certain people. The NSW

Health web site claims that up to 47% of the population is eligible for it, which is more generous than other states, but that figure includes all children. The full policy on eligibility is found here: https://www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/Pages/doc.aspx?dn=PD2017_027

By its own admission, the public dental system has limited resources and you will likely go on a waiting list unless you are admitted to hospital.

The following eligibility requirements are needed in order for adults to be receive non-admitted oral health care in the NSW public sector :

- Normally reside within the boundary of the Local Health District providing the care, and;
- Be eligible for Medicare, and;
- Be 18 years of age or older, and;
- Hold, or be listed as a dependent on, one of the following valid Australian Government concession cards:
 - o Health Care Card
 - o Pensioner Concession Card
 - o Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

Pain and discomfort

Having a dental procedure is awkward and uncomfortable. Some dentists are very good at dealing with frightened patients. They know that you are beside yourself with terror, that you fear them more than anything in the world. But they want you to keep coming back, so they tend to go all out to spare you any unnecessary discomfort. As for actual pain, I have had a couple of twinges but nothing a dentist has done to me comes even close to the pain of a dental abscess. Some of the more radical procedures are actually more pleasant than having your teeth cleaned, because you are locally anaesthetised. Yes, the needle does sting a bit, especially when they administer it in the soft palate, but it is more 'icky' than painful.

Fear

If you are still scared, join the club. Who wouldn't be scared of a dude with a drill grabbing you in a headlock and letting rip on your jaw. But hang in there. After a while, though it becomes kind of... boring.

ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #10: Personal Safety



Keeping Safe in an Era of Scams

By Grant J Everett

The “Nigerian Prince needs to transfer money” ruse is an old, well-known con, and it’s easy to chuckle at the thought of somebody falling for it nowadays. The thing is, scams don’t have to be 100% effective: if a scammer can fool just one person a week for a couple a thousand dollars each time, it’s worth striking out with 99 others along the way. It’s just like fishing: you don’t go out expecting to catch every fish.

Scammers prefer to prey on the vulnerable, but they will target people from all backgrounds, ages and income levels. Scammers are storytellers who will use the latest technology, products and services to create the most convincing tale they can, and that means any unexpected phonecalls, emails, texts or Friend requests you receive have the potential to be from a scammer. This means it is never safe to provide your personal details to anyone who contacts you in an unsolicited manner, no matter who they say they represent. Don’t click on any of the links or attachments, either.

But what if you receive an email from a company or organisation you’ve dealt with before, like Australia Post or the Australian Taxation Office or eBay? If you want to be 100% sure, you can contact the person, organisation or company through the official channels to see if they are legitimate. You can verify their identity through an independent source such as a phone book or a Google search, but don’t use any contact details they have provided in the suspect message! If the person is legitimate then they will understand your caution, and will not dissuade you from using trusted

channels to do your business.

INSERT: A popular scam doing the rounds at the moment is claiming to be from the debt recovery department at the Australian Taxation Office, and that they will have to issue a warrant for your arrest if you do not do exactly as they say.

Top tips

Here are a few basic precautions that can help keep you safe from scammers. Websites provided by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC), ScamWatch and the Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC) can tell you everything you could possibly want to know about scams and scammers.

For instance...

If you receive a message or email from a friend that seems unusual or out of character, contact them directly to check if it really was them. If they’re being imitated, they’ll want to know.

Be careful with how much you share on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc). Scammers can steal your content and use it to target your contacts. You can also adjust your privacy and security settings on social media to specify exactly how much of your profile is visible, and to who.

Scammers like to isolate their victims. It’s easier to fool one person than a group of five. If somebody contacts you and tells you to keep something a secret from your spouse or your family, it’s a dead giveaway something is amiss.

Use passwords to keep all your devices secure and keep them private. A strong password has a mixture of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols, and is difficult to guess. Don’t use the same password for everything, and update them regularly.

Never open a pop-up window, a link or an attachment in a suspicious email. This is a popular way to infect computers with a virus that will steal your passwords and other details.

Don’t agree to transfer money or goods for somebody else, as this can fall under the umbrella of money laundering. This is a criminal offence with very harsh penalties.

Be careful when shopping online. Beware of offers that seem too good to be true, and only use your PayPal account or credit card on sites that you know and trust.

No matter where you’re shopping, being asked to pay for something in unusual ways is always a red flag. Scammers will often want preloaded debit cards, gift cards, or iTunes cards.

“Phishing” scams can look just like the real thing, as official documents and corporate emails can be faked by stealing logos, graphics and design styles from legitimate websites.

A generic greeting in an email is always a red flag. If your exact name, address, account number and other private details aren’t already included in the email, then disregard it. Poor quality presentation, like bad grammar and spelling, are another giveaway.

Never heard of the company or organisation? It’s best to disregard the message.

Fake dating profiles are common. Scammers will use stolen photos of beautiful women or hunky men, but an image search service such as TinEye can confirm if “their” photo has been appropriated.

Never use public computers (libraries, internet cafes) or WiFi hotspots to perform sensitive tasks like online banking or anything else that involves sharing personal information.

Update your security software and back up your content regularly.

What’s worse than being scammed? Being scammed twice! Common follow-up scams include pretending to be a law enforcement agency that has been investigating your case, and claiming they can retrieve your money for a fee (police officers DO NOT charge the general public for their services!).

For more information...

www.accc.gov.au/consumers/consumer-protection/protecting-yourself-from-scams

www.scamwatch.gov.au/get-help/protect-yourself-from-scams

www.moneysmart.gov.au/scams/avoiding-scams

ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #5: Interests and Activities

Alternatives to killing time

By Warren Heggarty

Clive, a young English gentleman who writes for VICE, decided to give up drinking for a month to “cleanse his internal organs.” Scanning the Internet for something to do while drying out, he balked at every idea. Here, we baulk back at him, ruthlessly pointing out that he’s missing out on the ride of his life. (Martin, 2013)

Let’s have a pudding Party

“Sure, a nice idea,” Clive groans, “Everyone likes cheesecake, right? But how many people with booze abuse issues are any good at making puddings?” The very idea of knocking off the grog, or recovering from some kind of mental health issue, is to EXPAND your repertoire and become more than you once were. Learning how to make puddings is one of the most excellent ways of doing this. Enrolling in an evening college will lead to meeting lots of hunks/babes who love pudding as much as you do. And you will be politely invited to go home to their place to enjoy that pudding. And vice versa.

Swap Shop Party

Where everybody brings second hand stuff to exchange with others. Clive snarls that he would not want to swap “puke stained” gear with other “semi alcoholics.” Again, the point is being missed. The ingredients of mystery paired together with the possibility of gain surely outshine the inevitability of a bad hangover. Besides, swapping items of clothing with fellow party goers sounds like fun and it is about time one learned how to remove puke stains.

Afternoon tea in a posh hotel

Predictably, Clive, a pommie, plays the class war card, supposing himself to be a hard drinking working class boy who would never go in for this Tory nonsense. Yet a whole Japanese working class fashion subculture called LOLITA (not to be confused with Vladimir



Nabokov’s novel) involves dressing up like a princess (or a prince) and going round all the poshest tea shops. What a great way to meet interesting people! A boy LOLITA, by the way, is known as an OUJI (pronounced orgy) in Japanese, and there is nothing to stop Clive donning his finest garb and getting amongst it.

Go Dancing

Again, Clive dismisses this alternative lifestyle without even giving it a chance. He probably thinks dancing is that nonsense he sees on the TV, which has nothing to do with actual dancing. Dancing while sober brings you into contact (some forms of dance bring you into actual PHYSICAL contact) with other charming people in a choreographed manner which is designed to make it easier for shy, sober people to interact. It is also a great form of physical activity with many health benefits.

Karaoke

We feel that Clive knows deep in his heart that the juvenile behaviour he indulges in while drunk has a more cultivated, attractive alternative form. Like Sober Karaoke. He quips “Why fill yourself with (drunk) courage and embarrass yourself in front of strangers when you can embarrass yourself in close proximity to people you know and love without even having the excuse of drunkenness to fall back on?” The answer to this question is “Because it’s more fun that way.”

Ice Skating and Roller Disco

Clive dismisses ice skating without mentioning a phobia of slicing his

ABOVE: After the pudding party, why not visit a tea shop for Devonshire tea, or (as demonstrated) a Japanese tea ceremony?

fingers off, which is quite creative. But he is obviously jealous that ice skating rinks are full of people on “second (and presumably subsequent) dates.” Clive is still clinging to the idea that drunken one night stands are the way to go. And there is a reason that Olivia Newton John’s greatest role took place in a roller skating rink (Xanadu). It is because the millennial generation of today would not exist without Roller Disco.

Go on, Clive, sneer and snort all you like at the sober cavorting of people who have something to do with their lives. We sing, we dance, we skate, we do posh things, we swap gear and we stuff ourselves with puddings. Respect us, Clive. We are your parents.

Here are some more sober activities (suitable for couples too): Go to a second hand book store (we prefer to call them VINTAGE book stores). Go to a planetarium and gaze at the stars. Take a trip to IKEA and imagine your dream home (for couples, this will help gauge your interior design compatibility). Watch a really awful B movie. (*Glen or Glenda* with Ed Wood is a special favourite of Panorama). Go to the speedway. Go to the horse races. Go swimming. Go kayaking. Go horse riding. Play golf. Read horror novels aloud to one another...

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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #6: Physical Health

How creative expression can do wonders for your health

Grant J Everett

Creative pastimes like art or writing or dancing or playing an instrument have more to offer besides fun. Being creative improves your brain function, allows you to express difficult emotions, and can even help with a mental health recovery journey. For example, expressive writing (where you narrate an event and explain how it affected you) is an effective way to overcome trauma, and while you might not feel the best in the immediate aftermath, the positive long-term effects are well worth any temporary discomfort. But did you know that creative pursuits can do wonders for your *physical* health, too? Not only can tapping into your creative side improve your overall wellbeing, but you don't need to be an artistic prodigy to gain these benefits. Anybody can do it!

So how could painting a picture or penning a story improve your health?

Boosting your immune system

Want a good reason to keep a journal? Studies show that people who write about their daily experiences have a stronger immune system. A randomised trial of people undergoing HIV treatment were asked to regularly write about their experiences, and this group exhibited a marked increase in their CD4+ lymphocyte count (which is what HIV attacks, making this a matter of life and death).

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15039514

Listening to music can also rejuvenate the functioning of your immune system, stimulate the limbic system and help us deal with stressful stimuli.

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0197455606001080

Helping you deal with pain

Writing has been proven to help with chronic pain management. After expressing their angry feelings in writing, a group of people dealing with conditions that cause chronic pain noted improved pain control and a decline in severity after a period of 9 weeks.

link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10865-008-9149-4

Flowing into happiness

Have you heard of flow? It's what you call it when you're completely absorbed in something, the kind of focus where you lose all sense of self and time. When you are creating something, no matter what it is, your brain is flooded with the feel-good motivational chemical dopamine. A dopamine hit will encourage you to indulge in similar behaviour in the future. Any repetitive creative motions like knitting, drawing, or writing can activate this flow, and triggering it reduces anxiety, boosts your mood, and even slows your heart rate. Better yet, dopamine is a natural anti-depressant, and being happy can work wonders with your health.

A form of meditation

The average person has about sixty THOUSAND thoughts a day. A creative act can help focus the mind, and the calming effects it provides the brain and body are comparable to meditation. As meditation has many, many proven health benefits, this is a good thing.

mindworks.org/blog/health-benefits-of-meditation

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21521653, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27753158

Trimming a few kilograms

Dancing is one of the more physical forms of creative expression, so it's no surprise that it has many health benefits. For instance, a study focusing on breast cancer survivors found that dancing helped to improve their shoulder function, and had a positive impact on

their body image.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16046894

Dancing can also be a fun way of keeping fit. In 2014, Roni Tarver became a media sensation after losing 45 kilograms with a dance routine.

edition.cnn.com/2014/06/02/health/weight-loss-roni-tarver-irpt/index.html

Recent research has shown that Zumba programs can improve blood pressure and triglyceride levels, while previous studies have linked aerobic dance with better weight management.

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24921620, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9682520

A Korean study from 2007 that looked at hip-hop alongside aerobic dancing found that participants not only experienced improved mood, but also reported lower levels of fatigue.

journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2466/pms.104.4.1265-1270

www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/248002.php

So with all the great health benefits that creative pursuits have to offer, why not take advantage of it by welcoming more art into your life? Start scribbling, shaping, or getting your hands dirty. Put on a CD, or pick up a guitar. No matter what form it takes, get creative!

Perhaps you'd like to exercise your creativity by writing an article for Panorama? If so, let us know!

Source:

"What are the health benefits of being creative?", Maria Cohut, Friday 16 February 2018

www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320947.php

"The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature", Heather L. Stuckey and Jeremy Nobel, February 2010

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629

"Here's How Creativity Actually Improves Your Health", Ashley Stahl, Forbes website, Jul 25, 2018

www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2018/07/25/heres-how-creativity-actually-improves-your-health/#635d777a13a6

ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #21: Managing Money



By Warren Heggarty

You might have heard that the Hayne Royal Commission into financial institutions has revealed some pretty poor corporate behaviour on the part of major financial corporations like banks and insurance companies.

Short term gain seems to have been prioritised over long term reputation. You would think that having been caught out, the banks would have a short term goal to lift their game. But no, it seems they are conveniently taking a long view of it. From the papers on Tuesday 27 November 2018:

[NAB Chairman Ken] Henry and [CEO] Andrew Thorburn were yesterday grilled at the banking royal commission over how they would stamp out bad behaviour –including charging fees to people who had died- and the time it would take. “It could be 10 years,” Dr Henry said. “I hope not, but I wouldn’t be at all surprised. That would not be unusual for organisations that seek to

embed challenge in cultures.” (Moullkia & Butler, 2018)

Indeed. Fortunately, Panorama readers do not have to suffer with that kind of lack of enthusiasm for change when it comes to managing finances. Many of us, it is true, have picked up some unhelpful money habits (although fleeing the dead is probably uncommon among the people who access our services) but it doesn’t take ten years to make a start.

The long term view is unnatural

One of the problems ALL humans face with money is that it is natural for us to seek short term results. Successfully managing money (and many other things including our overall health) requires us to take a long term view. It is unnatural in a way. We often have to resist the urge to do what comes naturally if we want to do what is best for ourselves.

The long term view is better

One of the hard lessons in life is ‘deferred gratification.’ That means going without in the short term to ensure we have something much better in the long term. Short term sacrifices often pave the way to big long term benefits, rather like the way spending time and money on education now can lead you to a better job later. Another example is that being a low paid apprentice to a tradesperson doing menial work for four years can help set us up to become self employed in that trade down the track.

But HOW do we take the long term view?

‘Many of us start out the year with the intention of making revolutionary changes to our lives.’ Says Dr Campbell Hegggen, lecturer in financial planning at Deakin University’s Faculty of Business and Law. In reality, focusing on incremental behavioural changes and forming good habits for the long-term is often more effective.’ that is, taking baby steps, one at a time. As humans are hardwired to think more in the here and now, it means ‘we find it easier to prioritise smaller, more immediate rewards over larger, slower ones – like long-term savings,’ (Deakin University)

He recommends six steps which you can read in detail at the website this.deakin.edu.au. These are: Create a plan, set realistic goals, share your goals (ie, talk about them with others), focus on the goals (not the losses), automate your saving and be more mindful of your spending.

So if you make a start now, just think! By the time the banks have changed their toxic culture and (perhaps) rehabilitated themselves in the eyes of their customers, you will be ten years closer to where you want to be.

But you need to be serious about it.

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ACTION: Adapting CANSAS to Individuals' Own Needs

Recovery Conversation Theme #22: Income and Entitlements

Is being on the Disability Support Pension less stable than ever?

By Grant J Everett

On the surface, the Disability Support Pension seems pretty straightforward: if an Australian citizen proves their eligibility, they will receive the correct amount of social security from the government. But there's a lot going on behind the scenes of social security. Here are a few factors that could really change the way the DSP operates for some of our readers.

Pensions take a Pounding

Last year, a huge crackdown on Disability Support Pension recipients by the Department of Social Services was cancelled after very poor results. This was planned to take the form of conducting medical reviews of 90,000 people on the DSP over the space of three years to test for their ongoing eligibility. It was projected that this would lead to the cancellation of 2,300 Pensions and also move a further 1,800 people onto the much lower Newstart allowance, saving the government more than \$61.2 million over five years. However, after just one year and more than 30,000 reviews, only 2% of people reviewed did not meet the new criteria. This led to concerns that running the scheme was costing more than it saved, but the Department of Social Services didn't reveal if they'd ended up with a net loss. The fact that this crackdown has been cancelled speaks volumes.

"In May, I indicated that the department was monitoring that process...and the government has decided not to continue with that measure," said Kathryn Campbell, the secretary of the Department of Human Services.

Rachel Siewert, Family and Community Services spokeswoman of the Greens,

was pleased the crackdown had been scrapped, but she accused Labor and the Coalition of trying to save money by taking it from people in need.

"People whose conditions have not 'stabilised' or who don't meet the stricter eligibility criteria will most likely be condemned to the lower Newstart payment. So here we have people with disability, needing medical treatments and support living on payments as low as \$38 a day," Ms Siewert said.

Pensions in Prisons

According to Christopher Knaus from The Guardian, if somebody on the Disability Support Pension became an inmate in an Australian prison, they used to be able to suspend their pensions for up to two years while they were behind bars and resume it once released. However, under new rules these benefits will be entirely cut off in 13 weeks. This cancellation will be put into effect even if someone is still on remand or eventually found not guilty. This new arrangement went into place at the start of 2019.

Social services minister Dan Tehan said these changes have brought the DSP in line with other welfare payments, like Newstart and Youth Allowance, that are suspended and cancelled while a recipient is incarcerated.

"The Department of Human Services assists people in prison to claim appropriate income support on their release," said Minister Tehan.

This issue gets tricky when you consider that there are new, more stringent requirements to getting on the DSP now, and it is estimated that about 10% of the people who are cut off the DSP in prison will no longer be eligible to receive it again once they are released. Around 220 people are expected to be cut off, allowing the government to save around \$5.2 million in NSW each year. The key fear is that taking away this support will only increase the odds of newly released people falling into homelessness, destitution and recidivism.

People with disability are massively

over-represented in Australian prisons. While people with disability make up 50% of the prison population, they only make up 18% of the general community. Earlier in 2018, a Human Rights Watch report found prisoners with a disability are often faced mistreatment or abuse behind bars, including being locked in solitary confinement for prolonged periods and physical abuse.

Pensioners Plunging?

Since 2014 there has been an unprecedented drop in the number of Australians who receive the Disability Support Pension. Despite population growth, in the space of 4 years a total of 71,500 people have been kicked off the pension Australia wide. As the number of pensioners was around 775,000 people, this is a reduction of 9 percent.

"This reduction would be good news if the people who would have been on DSP are now in jobs, but we don't know that," said National Disability Services Chief Executive Ken Baker. "The employment rate of people with disability in Australia has been low and static for a long time."

Policy changes have seen thousands of disability pensioners moved to the much-lower Newstart allowance, and forcing new claimants under the age of 35 to be assessed by government-appointed doctors has pushed 33,000 people off the DSP. Mr Baker added that the Government must focus on strengthening the support and pathways in pursuit of welfare reform, enabling many more people with disability to work.

The number of new Disability Support Pension recipients has fallen dramatically in recent years after the eligibility requirements were tightened in 2012, with the successful claim rate falling from 69% in 2011-12 to 40.6% in 2014-15. Estimates suggest the tightening of DSP eligibility criteria has now led to a record 63% drop in successful claims between 2010 and 2016. Over 100,000 DSP claims were made in the 2017-18 financial year, with the success rate up at 29.8% from 28.3% the previous year.



ABOVE: Julie and Johnny nearly lost their grandpa, but fortunately The Chairman survived to count his blessings. PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN HUA

the Lady of the House thought about all the times that The Chairman has spent in a state of severe depression, worrying for nothing. Maybe this real emergency would enable him to count his blessings.

She said, “Our three children and I have told you millions of times but you never listen to us! Now that you have escaped this heart attack with your life, we hope you will be able to count your blessings! From now on, we would like to see you become resilient like Uncle Toby!”

“Madam, I am terribly sorry that I haven’t been counting my blessings like Uncle Toby, you, and our three children! I promise from now on, I will improve and always try to think positively like you guys so that I can enjoy life more. I can see there is light at the end of the tunnel!”

Uncle Toby came to visit soon after, armed with a bunch of roses from ALDI.

“Listen, Mr Chairman, you are not to keep getting sick all the time. I have brought my two grandchildren to cheer you up too. Look at me, I am 88 and I haven’t been to the hospital in my entire life! Look at you! You are only 75 and it seems to me that hospital is your second home! Ha ha ha, excuse me, Kenny, I am only joking to cheer you up. Listen Kenny, after you are discharged from the hospital, I would like to invite you to be guest of honour for a few weeks. I will conduct a special training course to train you to become an optimistic and happy person like me, so that you will not visit the hospital so often.”

“Uncle Toby, you are really my good mate. Thank you so much for the offer. I think after the training, I will become a strong-minded and happy person like you. Thank you so kindly for your visit today and your visit means a lot to me. I promise that from now on, I must think positively, be strong-minded and play golf with you!”

“That’s the boy, Kenny! One of five people around the world experiences some sort of mental health issue and some of them are more complicated than your case however they still carry on with their lives. They have to accept what they are and you too, you have to face it and fight against it. Kenny, don’t give in! She’ll be right!”

Heart Attack part 2

The Chairman counts his blessings

by Ken Hua aka The Chairman and Chief Administrator of Country Cottage

“Professor Leung, can I ask you a question?” said the Chairman. “Will there be any risk and...am I going to be okay, Sir?”

As you might recall from our December 2018 issue, The Chairman (Ken Hua) had a heart attack. Hovering between life and death gave Ken the opportunity to reflect and put his anxiety and depression into perspective. He continues his story...

The life saving surgery by Professor Leung took nearly two hours to complete. As he awoke afterwards our Chairman saw that both the Lady of the House and his son the Diamond Boy were there wearing a big smile, standing next to our Chairman’s bed. Soon, it became an international event as they were joined by many other visitors via WEBCHAT including Platinum Boy (from Switzerland), Platinum Girl and the grandchildren Julie and Johnny (from Ireland).

Our Chairman looked calm and relaxed, as one often does after anaesthetic, and he wore a big sweet smile and told them he was happy that he had had the operation.

“Good day, Grandpa!” said Julia and her younger brother Johnny and their Mummy from Ireland. “You look great, Grandpa!”

“My dear Julie & Johnny, please come closer to the camera, so that I can have a good look at my two gorgeous grandkids. I have been missing you guys!”

“Grandpa, just take it easy and relax so that you will recover from your sickness quicker.”

“Okay, Julie & Johnny, but let me ask you something. How was your kindergarten going?”

“Grandpa, very good! I came second in the mid term exam and Johnny came third.”

“Julie & Johnny! Both of you are just great! It is nice to talk with all you guys. Thanks to the new technology nowadays, keeping in touch with our loved ones is at your fingertips even living thousands and thousand miles from each other. May God bless our family!”

Now that the Chairman was recovering,

Social Citizenship Think Tank: Let's take it up to the next level



By Warren Heggarty

Flourish Australia began developing the current Recovery Action Framework a few years ago to enable us to be at the forefront of mental health services, that is, to truly put the people who access our service at the centre of everything we do.

Not content to rest on our laurels, on 4 December 2017 we held the first of a series of Social Citizenship Think Tanks which continued throughout 2018. We hope these Think Tanks will carry the vision even further.

"Few people in Australia are talking about citizenship in this way," said Chief Executive Officer Designate Mark Orr at that first meeting. "It is cutting edge."

There were 21 members of the Think Tank, plus facilitators Fay Jackson (General Manager, Inclusion) and Kim Jones (Project Officer, Inclusion). Members of the Think Tank included the widest possible diversity of people who access our services as well as supported employees and staff members.

Flourish Australia would like to see people escape the "tyranny of low expectations." This is where people with lived experience lose choice and control in their lives because, for example, life

on a low income (such as on the DSP) has become their "comfort zone."

We consider that it is important to lead the way in developing services that facilitate people reaching their full citizenship in spite of living with symptoms and other challenges, and in spite of any arguments around the meaning of "recovery."

"Recovery," according to Michael Rowe and Larry Davidson, "has at times been misunderstood or misinterpreted, including being used as an excuse for cutting needed services and supports in the guise of allowing people to pursue their own personal recovery journeys."

At times, they say, recovery literature has "paid less attention to the material, social, cultural, political and economic contexts in which people pursue recovery." Citizenship, they say, is an alternative approach to "recovery" that balances out the "emphasis on the lone individual pursuing his or her recovery journey." (Rowe & Davidson, 2016, p. 14a)

To explore the idea of citizenship within Flourish Australia's services, in Spring 2017 we notified staff and people who access our services that we were intending to put together a cross section of the organisation to participate in

a Citizenship Think Tank. The Think Tank's focus is centred around creating clear pathways into citizenship for a person-led Flourish Australia that has a well-being focus. This is to ensure that we concentrate on supporting people accessing our services to engage in all of the aspects of life.

To give you some idea of the substance of the Think Tank, it launched discussions by considering the five "R's" referred to by Rowe and Davidson in their paper "Recovering Citizenship."

These are:

1. Rights
2. Responsibilities
3. Roles
4. Resources
5. Relationships
6. Roots

Rowe and Davidson's work was based upon an actual project involving homeless people called "Citizens." One of the things they did, to give you an idea, was develop a Leadership Project "which trained people who were or had been homeless to sit on the boards of agencies and action groups of local government and a state-wide advocacy organisation." (Rowe & Davidson, 2016, p. 18b)

The proceedings of the Think Tank have by no means been limited to ideas from Rowe and Davidson. Debate and discussion has been wide-ranging and robust. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, the Think Tank has been supplemented by other gatherings, for example, meetings of Aboriginal and other first nations people, and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. We've had an LGBTIQ forum and a Youth forum, too.

As with the Recovery Action Framework, the Think Tank has been considering the results we would like to achieve, how to measure those results and what "vital behaviours" by all of us are likely to bring those results about.

It truly is "cutting edge!"

Reference

Michael Rowe and Larry Davidson, Recovering Citizenship, *Isr J Psychiatry Relat Sci* -Vol.53 -No 1 (2016)



Welcome Here!

ACON's "Welcome Here Project" was created to support businesses and organisations throughout NSW in declaring that their locations are safe and welcoming spaces for the Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. As this fits perfectly with our own vision of a fully inclusive community, over the span of 2018 Flourish Australia became an active participant in the Welcome Here Project.

It's all pretty simple: when one of our locations confirms with ACON that we want to be involved, that location is provided with a nifty rainbow sticker declaring that the LGBTIQ community is Welcome Here. Every time another one of our branches puts up one of these stickers, we're

sure to crow about it on Facebook.

To date, teams at Moree, Marrickville, Newcastle, Head Office at Sydney Olympic Park, Warana and Headspace at Broken Hill have all proudly joined the Welcome Here Project, and there will certainly be more to come!

For more information, or to register your business or organisation as a member, head to...

www.welcomehere.org.au/

#FollowTheRainbow
#ACONWelcomeHere #headspace
#youth #wellbeing #lgbtiq





My journey towards becoming a peer worker: Part One

ABOVE LEFT: Glenda with husband Dave and their twins Laura (far left) and Josh. ABOVE RIGHT: Glenda graduating her Bachelor's in Primary Teaching with a proud Dave PHOTO BY GLENDA PATON

By Glenda Paton, Peer Worker

I reach down to gently press the pause button on the treadmill that is life. I am guilty of jumping from one task to another, one phase of life to the next, without always taking the time to reflect on what I have been through, what I am going through, and where I am headed. How have I come to be a peer support worker, helping people who are struggling with their mental health and in other areas of their lives? While it can be emotionally exhausting, this is a deeply fulfilling role where finishing the day comes with a sense of having made a difference in someone else's life.

For me, it started in the middle of my high school years. I missed quite a bit of Year Nine and the majority of Year Twelve. After several stressful events occurring within a short space of time - the suicide of a boy who lived down the street, being bullied, and a loving but occasionally chaotic family life - I experienced a "manic" episode of bipolar disorder. I had difficulty getting to sleep, my thoughts raced faster than a V8 car, and my speech was going a mile a minute. I sometimes did unusual things, and some of these memories are clearly embedded in my mind. For instance, I remember my sister trying to suppress a chuckle as I bounded up

to the family dinner table decked out in about five coats and six hats. Instead of sleeping I drew and wrote in my journal at all hours of the night, occasionally hallucinating from lack of sleep. My family were worried, and often stood guard at my door. One night I suddenly opened my bedroom door to find them darting away. I also remember the embarrassment on returning to school when I had to retrieve stuffed animals from my locker that I had brought with me in the midst of my heightened mental state.

Somehow I managed to stay out of hospital and completed Year 10 and 11 without further incident. I was on track to do well in the HSC, studying English Extension, Ancient History, Society and Culture, Legal Studies and Photography, among other subjects. Unfortunately, I became very unwell and was admitted to Campbelltown Hospital on Australia Day, 2001, at the age of seventeen. I remember that day clearly: I'd gone to the movies with my parents to see Chicken Run (by the makers of Wallace & Gromit) and we'd gone swimming afterwards. My parents were concerned that I wasn't acting like myself, and took me to hospital. I was admitted while still in my swimmers. My parents stayed for a while with me, but I was left alone in a small room for quite some time after

they went home. Towards the end of the day a nurse came in and said, "Oh, are you still here?" and proceeded to find me a bed.

Admitted

Waratah House was an adult mental health ward. There were no adolescent wards back then, even in the busy metropolitan area of Campbelltown. We weren't allowed to have any glass, and our shoelaces were removed from our shoes. It was a half hour drive from where I lived, and this is where I was diagnosed with the harsh, unwieldy term "schizoaffective disorder", which meant I had symptoms of bipolar disorder mixed with schizophrenia. As the youngest person on the ward I occasionally found this environment confronting, but my mother had previously been admitted for an episode of bipolar disorder, so I was familiar with the environment from visiting her.

There was a small outdoor area with a high brick wall, a little grass and not much else. I remember going out to the courtyard and wishing that I was on a bushwalk or amongst actual nature. I became frustrated when people smoked at the nice, shady tables, and I had to sit at the far end of the courtyard in the sun to get away from the smoke. To this day

Recovery Story

I detest that the main activities offered in many mental health wards is watching television or going for smoke breaks.

My most vivid memories from living in Waratah House were the group outings to Macarthur Square shopping centre. Picture a large group of adults shuffling along with no shoelaces in their shoes: we must have looked quite a sight. I also remember being moved from room to room. For instance, one night somebody desperately needed a bed, and as there weren't any available I ended up being put in the "quiet room", which had padded walls and a padded floor. Even though the door was propped open and a real mattress was placed in the room, I will never forget that night.

I would watch the TV and write my own language of squiggles and squares that was only comprehensible to me, highlighting things that stood out from what was being shown on television. When I am unwell, television is not helpful – I think that people on the screen can hear my thoughts, and I become preoccupied with what's going on in the world. I also experienced delusions at times, like thinking that celebrity horse trainer Gai Waterhouse had visited another patient.

Eventually, I was moved to the other side of Waratah House where there was more freedom. There was a piano, a room where you could listen to music, and art sessions. I frequently played the piano to pass the time, and it was relaxing to do art. I became friends with one lady who was always happy and laughing, and I was very surprised to find out later on that she was suffering from depression. Even Robin Williams, an actor famous for comedy, battled with depression, so I suppose people have a way of masking the pain that they are feeling inside, acting happy when inside their heart is breaking.

Over to Redbank House

I'll always remember my two high school friends who visited me. I'm not sure whether my other friends were banned from visiting by their apprehensive parents or whether the thought of going into an adult mental health ward was too much for them, but I'll always treasure the visits I received. My family was very supportive this whole time,

and visited me as often as they could.

After several months I was transferred to a school for children experiencing mental health issues called Redbank School in Westmead Hospital. This environment was more relaxing and there was even a pool we could use, but after being around adults for so long I found the children to be quite immature and wished I could talk with adults like in Waratah House. I also started putting on weight after starting a medication called Clozapine, and I felt embarrassed and self-conscious when they put me on a special diet. All the other patients had the same meals apart from myself and a girl who had anorexia (she had to have milkshakes and foods to try and put on weight).

I would walk around Westmead Hospital, seeing the helicopters come and go, and visiting the Captain Starlight room. I have clear memories of walking through the Casuarina trees surrounding the brain injury unit, and this became significant years later when I met the man who would become my husband, Dave. Dave had been in a terrible car accident, and it turned out that he had spent a lot of time in the same brain injury rehabilitation ward I used to walk past. The accident happened between his HSC trial exams and the actual HSC exams, but Dave was credited for the HSC based on his trial marks. He was paralysed down his right side and spent years in rehabilitation just learning to walk and talk again.

That was one reason we became so close: we both had a \$#@! year in 2001.

I wouldn't meet Dave until years later. To this day we aren't sure if our stays actually overlapped, but we find it funny to think about the idea of a mental health patient and a brain injury patient meeting and getting married. One day I'll request my discharge summaries to find out for sure, as I'm still a little curious...

Picking up where I left off

After being discharged from hospital in October 2001, I returned to school just as my friends were preparing to sit their final exams. However, I had to complete my HSC with students who were in the year below me. It was especially frustrating when I realised

that Legal Studies and Ancient History were on the timetable during the same period, so I decided to complete my HSC over two years in order to do all the subjects I wanted to do and ease back into studying. In retrospect, this only prolonged the agony of Year 12, as I basically did it over three years (with the first year being in hospital). I could have gone to TAFE, but the closest TAFE was a half hour train trip away. I managed to get the HSC, and even made a handful of friends along the way. While my UAI was disappointing, it was high enough to get into my preferred course: Primary Teaching. I needed to move to Bathurst to study, as I couldn't get into Campbelltown or Wollongong universities.

Moving to Bathurst was massive, as I didn't know anyone there. A man at the local Baptist Church rented out an old house and the flats behind it, and all up there were seventeen university students living there. It was only about \$260 a month for my room, and I stayed there for most of my degree. And while the house was old and cold (and it's since been demolished) it was cheap and I was able to make friends with the other student residents.

I studied Primary Teaching at Charles Sturt Uni and began working as a research officer (a transcriptionist), which is basically typing out recordings for the various research projects being undertaken at the Uni. I still do this work today, and I quite enjoy it. Uni is where I met my husband Dave, and we got married just before I completed my final teaching internship. Dave went on to finish a Bachelor of Business Studies at Uni.

I spent 2009 working casual in primary teaching around the Central West region, and during this time I fell pregnant. While I enjoyed some days of teaching, it was a highly stressful job and it was nice to have some downtime before having kids. I began reducing my Clozapine as it isn't wise to be on that medication when you're pregnant due to potential birth deformities. What we *didn't* plan for was our discovery that we were about to be parents of twins...

To be continued next issue...

Learning to become a peer worker



Tanja's work placement at Resolve, Cranebrook

ABOVE Left: Tanja relaxes on the bus, satisfied with how her work placement went
PHOTO BY TANJA RAC . Top Right: The sitting room at Cranebrook. Bottom Right: One of
the four bedrooms. It's not like a hospital! PHOTOS BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Tanja Rac

By studying to become a Peer Worker, Tanja is learning how to use her lived experience of mental health issues to help others who are on a similar journey. This is her story.

I have been studying a Certificate IV in Mental Health (Peer Work) through the Mental Health Coordinating Council for over a year now. I want to use my life experiences to help other people, and this is the best way I can do that. Part of gaining the Certificate IV is doing some on-site work experience with a relevant organisation. I emailed a few service providers, and I ended up getting accepted to do my placement with Flourish Australia. They asked me where I wanted to do my work experience, and as Flourish Australia's Cranebrook service wasn't too far from where I lived, it was a good fit. Ash Kumar, the site manager was happy to support my placement which was for two days a week for four weeks.

Cranebrook is Part of the Resolve Program (see story 'Resolve in Action' in Panorama June 2018 pages 8-9). It services a very broad area, including Penrith, Windsor, Richmond, the Blue Mountains, and Lithgow. The team I worked with was pretty small, maybe eight people, six of them are peer

workers. About twenty people regularly access the service.

On my first day at Cranebrook we drove up to Katoomba to visit some people. It's a long way to travel, but it's beautiful. The mountains are special to me, as I've gone to Blackheath several times with my mum for short holidays. I've also attended Christian conventions there in the past.

There is a bit of a problem with public transport because the bus to Cranebrook only comes half hourly or hourly depending on the day, but I always kept track to make sure I got there on time. Sometimes the staff members offered to pick me up from Penrith Station if they were on the way to see someone, which was very considerate of them.

Flourish Australia's Cranebrook service is very new, having only opened in March 2018, and they help people who need more support than is usually on offer in the community. The main focus is supporting clients who would otherwise experience repeated hospital admissions.

There are a lot of ways the Cranebrook team can support people. This could be calling them to make sure they're traveling okay, or providing outreach services where they travel to people's

homes, supporting them with their day-to-day living. They can also bring people into the house at Cranebrook house for group activities.

Peer workers can also support people to attend medical appointments and provide advocacy if they need it. Many of the people who attend the Cranebrook service have had admissions to the Pialla mental health unit at Nepean Hospital, and we visited some people at that unit during my placement.

The Cranebrook service also provides short-term accommodation. Upstairs there are bedrooms, each with an ensuite toilet. They don't look like hospital rooms at all!

The Cranebrook service runs 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and is covered by 3 shifts of workers: 7:30am to 5:30pm, 5:30pm to 11pm, and 11pm to 5:30am. They also have an around-the-clock warmline, and calls to the warmline can be redirected to on-call work mobiles if it's urgent.

My studies are close to wrapping up, but they aren't over yet. I recently submitted the Supervisor's Logs from my Cranebrook placement, and there's a few assessments I still need to do. I also need to create a survey for the people who work there or the carers or the consumers.

Now that I've completed my placement, this has helped me to think about where I want to go in the role of a mental health peer worker. It's given me a better understanding of what is involved, as I've never experienced this work firsthand before.

With my next steps as a peer worker there are options I'm going to explore, including New Horizons, NEAMI, and Flourish Australia. Just the other day I filled in an Expression Of Interest (EOI) for employment with Flourish Australia in the Western Sydney area. Wish me luck!

Resolve Program
6 Waterside Boulevard,
CRANEBROOK NSW 2749
(02) 9393 9388



**Flourish Australia
Buckingham House
43-45 Buckingham St
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010**

ABOVE: People enjoying creative moments during the Recovery Forum in Surry Hills, hosted by the members of Buckingham House. PHOTOS COURTESY PETER FARRUGIA

Recovery Forum at Surry Hills: Doing It For Ourselves

By Warren Heggarty

The people who access our services are stepping up to facilitate Recovery Forums. On the 3rd of December 2018 a large gathering at Surry Hills was co-facilitated by Deonny Zaroual. Deonny is a supported employee at Figtree Conference Centre and also a member of the Community Advisory Council. Having benefited from Flourish Australia's promotion of recovery, Deonny is now helping to spread the message to others through these forums, together with Peter Farrugia, our Peer Workforce Manager.

"We are trying to show people that they have a right to be a part of society no matter what disability they have, or what the look like, or what they can or cannot do," says Deonny. "We remind people that everyone is important and everyone should be in control of their own lives. We let them know they are not alone and that Flourish Australia has options to offer everyone in every situation where they are having difficulties."

Some of the tools they use to get this message across include using strength-based language, word cards, art collages, quizzes and group discussions.

"We had such a big turnout," Deonny said. "I was not expecting so many people. I was told to expect 20, but then just over 30 people showed up. Filling the room was a big success!"

Peter said that it was good to see people from all over the region, not just from Surry Hills but from places like Ashbury as well.

"It was great to have a person who accesses our service co-facilitating, too," he said, referring to Deonny.

"A lot of participants at first were unsure about things and just wanted to observe, so they sat and listened in," Deonny said. "To start off with, I went around the room with a sign-in sheet to gather permission from people who agreed to be included in photos. Not everyone wanted to do that. Once things got started, though, people who had just been

observing were asking if they could join in. As I always say, if anyone wants to join in, go for it. Anyone can."

"I have never worked with Peter Farrugia before, but it was such a pleasure to be part of it. As work experience, it was fantastic. I found Peter to be very professional and I learnt so much from him, especially about using strengths-based language. This is something that comes easily for him, but something I am still struggling with a bit!"

"I hope to be involved in a lot more future recovery forums. We will be visiting places such as Huskisson, Orange, Bourke, Warana, Moree, Maitland, Blacktown, Penrith, Wagga Wagga, and Griffith. I hope to see everyone there."

What did the participants think of the Recovery Forum experience? According to feedback from the diverse range of participants, it offered them freedom to voice their opinions, gave them confidence, supported their work goals, considered their individual needs and was non-judgemental. They commented on the welcoming friendliness of the forum saying that it "made me feel special" and "part of a family" and was a way to "make friends." It also took account of physical health supports.

Thanks to Peter Farrugia and Yasin Bagci for their assistance with this story



Raylene: Going above and beyond

ABOVE: If it needs doing, Raylene will do it! PHOTO BY GRANT EVERETT

By Grant J Everett

Raylene attends Flourish Australia's New Outlook day-to-day living centre at Wollongong. Like many of the people who access New Outlook, Raylene does her part to keep the place functioning. Raylene does so much, in fact, that people have often complimented her dedication and strong work ethic.

"I have a volunteer role at New Outlook which we call a Peer Associate. My role is very broad, but I basically do whatever is necessary to keep the centre running smoothly. I clean, take care of the bins, perform general maintenance work, a variety of admin tasks, I greet new arrivals and tells them about what there is to do today, ring up people's lunches at the till, and keep the computerised filing system in an orderly state. If it needs doing, I will do it!"

"I have created a lot of the important documents hanging up around New Outlook, including the Work Health & Safety posters that help prevent injuries, notifications about upcoming events, and timetables showing everything New Outlook has to offer. I've had a lot of experience with a word processor, and this hands-on practise has led me to a

new project: I'm the Editor of the New Outlook Newsletter, a young publication that we hope will become a familiar sight around Wollongong (and maybe even further)."

Just when you thought Raylene couldn't get any busier, she dedicates even MORE of her time to other worthwhile causes.

"For starters, I attend the Hearing Voices Network Group, which is a worldwide movement of people who hear voices. These meetings offer information, support and understanding to anyone who needs it, and they tend to focus on the deeper, personal meaning behind why individuals hear voices, rather than just relying on putting a medical label on it and medicating it. The Wollongong chapter of this group actually hold their gatherings at the New Outlook centre on Thursdays between 2pm and 3pm."

Raylene is also a Peer Mentor at The House With No Steps, one of Australia's leading disability service providers. She reports to Judy Topper, the Operations Manager, and she had a lot of nice things to say about her.

"Goldy Rutherford put me forward," Raylene said. "He thought I had the

appropriate experience and would be a good mentor to people. The House With No Steps isn't just for people with mobility issues: it's for all people with disability."

Raylene advocates for the basic human rights of people with mental health issues whenever she can, and is happy to go to bat for somebody if they have been treated unfairly. As she's had a lived experience of mental health issues since the 1990s, over the years Raylene has had plenty of opportunities to use her lived experience to help others who are going through similar struggles.

Thanks to Raylene for taking a few minutes to speaking with Panorama. We know how few you have to spare!

New Outlook
3 Station Street,
Wollongong, NSW 2500
(02) 9393 9156
Open weekdays
8AM to 4PM

Back On Track Health Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

<https://both.flourishaustralia.org.au/>



Passing out or fainting

By Grant J Everett

Fainting is a sudden, brief loss of consciousness caused by decreased blood flow to the brain. While fainting may occasionally indicate some sort of medical condition, the real danger comes from falling over and injuring yourself. This is especially serious among older people who can suffer severe injuries from even the smallest of tumbles. Thankfully, our bodies will usually correct blood flow problems to the brain before we reach the point of passing out, but not 100% of the time.

While there's no single universal cause for fainting, anything that interferes with your blood flow or affects your nerves and emotions can be a trigger. This can include intense spikes of anxiety, fear, pain or stress, low blood sugar, having too little salt in your system, or using alcohol or other drugs. It can even be the result of violent or excessive coughing, yawning, laughing, or hyperventilating. Standing up from a lying or sitting position too quickly can cause you to faint, as can neurological

conditions like Parkinson's disease and certain medications. Some types of fainting even seem to run in families.

Most cases of fainting don't require medical treatment. However, if you injured yourself, have diabetes, are pregnant, have a history of heart issues, experienced a loss of bladder or bowel control, or took longer than a few minutes to regain consciousness, you should consult your GP to make sure everything is okay. Preventative measures will vary from person to person, but can include avoiding hot and crowded environments, or not going to places that cause you severe emotional stress. And even if you've only fainted once, in future you'll need to watch out for warning symptoms like excessive yawning, a sudden clammy sweat, feeling sick, fast and deep breathing, confusion, lightheadedness, a ringing in your ears, blurred vision, seeing spots, or your vision going grey.

If injections or medical procedures make you feel faint and woozy, you should tell the doctor or nurse beforehand. They'll make sure you're lying down during the procedure.

If someone collapses, laying them on the ground with their head and their heart on roughly the same level will make it easier for blood to reach their brain, allowing them to return to consciousness after a minute or so. If possible, elevate their legs. If they don't regain consciousness within a couple of minutes, put them into the recovery position and call 000 for an ambulance. Stay with them until medical help arrives. After waking up from a faint it's normal to feel confused and weak and tired for half an hour or so, and it's likely you won't be able to remember what

you were doing just prior to passing out.

If you feel a faint coming on, the best technique is to lie down with your head lower than your legs. This will encourage blood flow to your brain, which will help to wake you up if you lose consciousness. If it isn't possible to lie down, sit with your head between your knees. If you've fainted at work, then this officially becomes a Work Health & Safety issue. It's best to consult your WHS officer and a healthcare professional to get cleared, as operating heavy machinery, for instance, can be very dangerous if somebody faints at the controls.

Sources:

www.webmd.com/brain/understanding-fainting-basics#1
www.nhs.uk/conditions/fainting/

BACK ON TRACK HEALTH Recommended health screening tests- talk to your GP

- Self-checking (skin, teeth, breasts)
- Skin exams
- Dental checkups
- Testicle checks



• There are new, less inconvenient procedures to test for cervical cancer now. Ask your doctor!

- Pregnancy
- Blood pressure
- Blood tests
- Obesity tests
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Diabetes
- Breast cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Bowel cancer
- Eye health
- Bone density
- Sexually Transmitted Infections

Find more on Flourish Australia's
Physical Health microsite
<https://both.flourishaustralia.org.au/>

"Your to-do list for a great Summer"



by Grant J Everett

Summer is a traditionally a time of holidays, beaches, fun and relaxation. With a little planning and a few basic supplies, you can stay safe and happy for the whole season.

Don't underestimate the sun

Our thinning ozone layer is letting through more harmful UV light than ever, making sun protection vital. There are two kinds of UV radiation: UVA rays penetrate deep into your skin, causing damage all the way down, and this leads to premature skin aging, eye damage (including cataracts), and reduces your ability to fight off illnesses. UVB rays inflict a more superficial kind of damage, and are the main cause of sunburn. Both UVA and UVB play a key role in the development of many skin cancers, including melanoma, the deadliest kind.

www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/ozone-layer/

www.paulaschoice.com/expert-advice/skincare-advice/sun-care/the-difference-between-uva-and-uvb-rays.html

www.skincancer.org/prevention/uva-and-uvb

"UVA & UVB", The Skin Cancer Foundation, September 20th 2017

Always use sunscreen whenever you go outside in Summer. Remember that cloudy or windy days won't stop you getting burnt. Be sure your sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB rays and has a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30. You can use creams,

gels, wipes, sprays, and roll-ons. Apply 30 minutes in advance, and use more than you think you need. If you're going swimming, use a water-resistant sunscreen, and reapply it at least every two hours.

www.melanoma.org.au/preventing-melanoma/how-do-i-protect-my-skin/

Limit your UV exposure by dressing for Summer. A wide-brim hat will protect your head and neck, the two places most vulnerable to skin cancer. If you're only wearing a baseball cap, put extra sunscreen on your ears and neck. The most effective sunglasses you can wear are the ones that block both UVA and UVB rays. You can also get clothes with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF). Like with sunscreen, the higher the UPF, the better. Darker clothes reflect more UV than pale clothes, and looser-fitting clothes provide more of a barrier between your skin and the sun.

If you can, avoid spending the whole day in the sun. Note that UV rays are at their strongest between 10am-2pm, so try to seek shade during these times.

"12 Tips to Stay Safe and Healthy This Summer", By Regine Harford, Good Health Rewards
www.goodhealthrewards.com/articles/Safety_for_Summer_Fun_S102.html

Sunburn takes time to develop. Get inside before you turn pink, or you'll wake up to a sunburn. Don't wait for the pain to warn you!

When you sweat, your body loses water. If you don't replenish your fluids,

you will become dehydrated. Signs of dehydration include not urinating all day, a dry mouth, and feeling dizzy standing up. The best thirst quencher is water, so be sure to keep topped up.

Examine your skin head-to-toe for moles and other growths every month, and see your GP at least once a year for a professional skin exam.

Allergies

Pollen allergies can ruin a fun Summer, but there are steps you can take. For instance, pollen counts tend to be lower on cooler, humid days, or after the rain. Allergy medications (either pills or nasal sprays) can also help, but if over-the-counter varieties don't do the trick, you can see your doctor. Keep in mind that some allergy medications can make you drowsy. Allergy vaccinations (a needle) might be an option for some people.

Insects

Summer is open season for tick and mosquito attacks. Besides being annoying, they can carry debilitating diseases. There's a lot you can do to protect yourself.

First off, use insect repellent on your exposed skin and clothes. You can buy a variety of bug-repelling options from any supermarket or pharmacy, but be sure to carefully follow the instructions. Your pharmacist or GP can give you more tailored advice.

Stay on cleared paths, especially in humid places or near woods or grassy areas. Ticks love jumping onto people from trees, and mosquitoes enjoy similar habitats. Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk, so as soon as you notice the first mosquito, change into long sleeves and pants. Tuck your pants into your socks so the bugs don't have anything to target.

Conduct a body check after coming home, especially of your warm, sweaty parts. If you find a tick attached anywhere to your skin, you have a couple of options: your GP can remove it for you, or if you feel confident you can remove it yourself with tweezers. A guide like this one can show you what to do:

www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

What is The Art Behind Eating Workshop?

The Art Behind Eating Workshop was created by Jade Ryall (our Back On Track Health Program Manager) and Jane Miller (our Community Arts Coordinator) in order to make healthy food choices easier and cheaper. This Workshop is based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Jane told us how it's been going.

What is the purpose of your Workshop?

The Art Behind Eating Workshop combines nutrition education, art-based theory and fun group activities for a hands-on experience. We want to present a new way of thinking about our relationship with food, and endeavour to share this information with the participants in a way that is fun, creative and encourages involvement. The Workshop's name came from the portion plates that the participants design, decorate and take home with them, and these plates serve several functions: they are a reminder of optimal portion sizes, spell out the correct ratio of colourful vegetables, low GI carbohydrates and lean proteins that we all need, and encourage people to try new colours of veggies. In a sense, these plates ARE the Art Behind Eating.

Why did you and Jade team up to run this Workshop?

Jade and I work together on the Professional Practice team over at Head Office. Jade brought the nutritional knowledge, and I have the art skills. It made sense to team up and pool our specialities.

Has this particular Workshop existed in other, earlier forms?

In May 2016, Jade and I facilitated a group at the PreEmploy Institute graduation at Buck House. The interactive group combined healthy eating information and artistic expression. Some of these elements

were incorporated into the Art Behind Eating Workshops.

Where have you run the Workshop?

We've held the Workshops at Penrith twice: once for their day-to-day living service, and once for Penrith YCLSS (Youth Community Living Support Service). We ran it at Harris Park a couple of times, as well as Flowerdale, Embark Cottage, Seven Hills and Figtree Conference Centre.

Who did you design the Workshop for?

I personally believe this Workshop can benefit everyone. I think I have a reasonably healthy diet, though I've made some recent changes to my plate using the colour principle and I feel better because of it. The health benefits are universal. I think deep down we all want to be a bit more healthy if we can manage it.

How many people are in each Workshop, and how long do they go for?

We limit group numbers to 6 to 8 people. This allows everyone to contribute to the discussion and have a go in the activities. It also gives Jade and myself time to help everyone with the painting-the-plate activity at the end of the group. Each Workshop goes for roughly 2 ½ to 3 hours.

I understand the participants are treated to a healthy lunch at the end. What did they eat, and why was this dish chosen?

The meal we prepare as a group contains foods we've promoted in the Workshop. We use vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, corn, coloured peppers, spinach, mushrooms, avocado or purple onions, as well as low-GI carbohydrates like wholemeal bread, wraps and rolls. Lean proteins - like chicken, tuna,

salmon, beef and pork, or legumes like chickpeas, lentils and beans - are also essential. Some participants may have discussed different ways of serving food, so when we prepare the lunch they are welcome to showcase their cultural techniques or other food prep talents. **How viable are these suggested changes for the Average Joe or Jill?**

With the Art Behind Eating Workshop, we aim to encourage practical change. This could be something small to start with. For example, if someone has chicken and chips for dinner, we'll encourage them to add some colour to the meal, as even a few slices of tomato will offer health benefits. Or take spaghetti bolognese, for example: adding grated carrot, mushrooms and capsicum into the sauce is a great way to increase your vegetable intake, and using wholemeal spaghetti will incorporate low GI carbohydrates. We also discuss including healthier, cheaper options, like using legumes, beans, and lentils for protein.

What benefits does this diet provide?

I hesitate to say "diet", as that can carry negative feelings for a lot of people. For me, I associate "diet" with many failures, and it makes me think of an unrealistic, unobtainable weight according to a medical model. I think a lot of people feel this way. However, I believe that if we eat food that is nutritious, less processed and in healthier portion sizes, and we combine this with regular exercise and we feel well, then we are well.

How can you tell if these Workshops have been effective?

After the initial round of Workshops, Jade and I came back to thank everyone by preparing and eating a healthy lunch. This also allowed us to follow up on our evaluations and have a chat over a nice meal. It gave everyone an opportunity to share what they'd learned about their own food intake, how they had incorporated what they learned, and what was holding them back from eating healthily. Sometimes thinking a little differently than we have been taught can shift our perceptions and make it easier to bring about change.

Are there plans to expand the Workshop?

I hope so. I believe in the Art Behind Eating Workshop. Jade and I have written up the workshop for use with the Flourish Learning Network (FLN).



A one stop shop for our physical health: The ccCHIP Experience

ABOVE: 'They engaged with me one hundred percent... They tried so hard to make me comfortable... How marvelous this clinic is!' says Martha of ccCHIP. PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Warren Heggarty

Martha* speaks very highly of her visit to the new Charles Perkins Centre ccCHIP dedicated to the physical health of people with mental health issues.

People with serious mental health issues live up to 20 or 25 years less on average than other people. Why? Because our physical health needs get overshadowed by our mental health issues.

Gaining referral to the health specialists we need is a complex and lengthy process at the best of times, let alone when we are mentally unwell. As revealed in previous issues of Panorama ccCHIP is a program that endeavours to bring specialists together in a 'one stop shop' so that people with mental health issues have a better chance of getting all the physical health help they need.

Now there are three ccCHIPS. There is the ccCHIP Outpatient clinic at Concord Hospital, an inpatient unit also at Concord and a new outpatient service in the Charles Perkins Centre Clinic, Sydney University, near RPA hospital in Camperdown.

So what sort of experience awaits those who get a referral to ccCHIP? Martha* who lives in inner Sydney filled us in.

'How marvellous this clinic is!' - Martha.

Martha* says that it is so important for people who live with mental health issues to understand the importance of our physical health. It is so important for us to engage with professionals who can support us with our physical health needs.

'At ccCHIP, we were matched up with a buddy (who I take was a registrar). Some of us also had supporters with us.' Martha saw four different clinicians in three hours. 'It was intense, but I was onto it' she laughs.

'I found everybody very supportive. They engaged with me one hundred percent. Everything that happened was fully transparent, and I understood one hundred percent what was happening and why. They tried so hard to make me comfortable.'

What did Martha think of the experience all up? 'I thought How marvellous this clinic is! Once you're on their books, too, they focus on following up, which is essential. I needed a lot of dental work done.'

So the question now is, how do you get

referred?

'My Mental Health Team suggested it to me,' said Martha. 'My key worker Jim* was aware of my complex history of chronic physical disease and mental health issues. He felt the support would make a huge effect in my life. So they said *would you be willing to consider it?* I said *absolutely.*'

One advantage of her experience is that Martha is not on the long public dental waiting list. 'I'm out of the dental wait list but now I'm a ccCHIP patient and I go to the Charles Perkins Centre at RPA. Dental hygiene is so necessary! We need to spread the word about it.'

Referrals

You and your GP can find referral details here
<http://ccchip.clinic/outpatient-clinic-charles-perkins-centre/>

Wednesdays | 1:30pm – 4:30pm
Tel: (02) 9767 6027
Fax: (02) 9767 7107

Location: (Pictured above) The Charles Perkins Centre Clinic, University of Sydney, John Hopkins Drive, (just off Missenden Rd at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital), Camperdown | NSW 2050



Above: In a shady part of the basement is Le Boudoir, a special place fitted with couches where residents can go to chill out and maybe shoot a few hoops!

PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

Welcome to 'Le Boudoir' at Camperdown

By Warren Heggarty

Manager Sharlene once jokingly asked a resident to accompany her downstairs to the 'BOUDOIR' meaning a little recreational area set up in the basement of the Camperdown Units. The name stuck and is now painted on the wall behind the tables, chairs, couches, vegetable plots and barbecue that furnish the chill out zone. There is even a full basketball ring for people who like to shoot a few hoops to relax.

Flourish Australia's Camperdown and Lilyfield residential units are located in the inner west of Sydney. There are eleven residents and an office in the block of twelve units Camperdown and seven people live in the four two bedroom outreach units at Lilyfield.

The staff are based at Camperdown 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The office has a bed in it- because a staff member sleeps over every night after the office closes at 11PM. Staff also make visits at least twice a day to Lilyfield. The people who access this service have all previously had

long hospital stays (a minimum of 15 months). The idea of these residential units is to have support close by so that residents can be as independent as possible.

There is a calendar of social events including weekend outings such as visits to the Aquarium, Coogee, Cockatoo Island and so forth. When Panorama popped in to Camperdown, mental health worker Abby was assisting one of the residents to buy themselves a new bed. Matilda was taking another to pick up some vegetables. Manager Sharlene and Senior Mental Health Worker Toni

told panorama that since the NDIS has come in, all of the residents have been connected to services that enable them to live in the community, away from hospital as much as possible.

Physical health is important, so they have good relations with the GPs at nearby Glebe Family Medical Practice. A General Practice Shared Care Clinician based with the health service at Camperdown is also involved. Many of the residents have also been supported in taking part in the physical health program at the Charles Perkins ccCHIP which we have previously featured in Panorama.

Sharlene and Toni speak about how a number of residents have achieved quite a number of goals lately. Things like completing education, getting employment, applying successfully for a loan and going for a drivers' licence. Such achievements show that people who have in the past required high levels of support are capable of achieving goals like anyone else. Sharlene said that it would be ideal if one day they could have another block of units which could be a 'step down' for when people got to the point of needing less immediate support.

Residents come to Camperdown via a referral process in partnership with Camperdown Community Mental Health Service's Mobile Assertive Treatment Team (MATT). The flats are leased from Metro Housing and the town houses from St George Housing.

Below: The Camperdown Units are in a convenient and leafy location. PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY



The Benefits of Risk

Or 'Better a broken arm than a broken spirit'



ABOVE: Alice exploring her environment. DRAWING BY SIR JOHN TENNIEL FROM LEWIS CARROLL'S 'ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND'

Could it be that everyday risk taking helps us learn about our environment and develop confidence in dealing with it?

By Warren Heggarty

Could trying to protect people all the time actually be making them less confident, less able to master their environment?

If taking risks is bad for us, why is it that 4,500,000,000 years of evolution has not completely eliminated risk-taking from our DNA? Could it be that a certain amount of risk is actually GOOD for us? According to David Ball, professor of risk management at Middlesex University, UK, people miss out on something when we try to make the world safe. We miss the opportunity to learn and adapt.. (Whipple, 2018)

This is suggested by an experiment carried out at Parish School in Houston, Texas, USA. This is a school for children with various disabilities and conditions. It has two playgrounds, a rickety old adventure playground with puddles and splintering bits of timber, and a nice neat, safe, modern playground like your council would approve.

The school's children use both playgrounds. Which do you think yields the most injuries? In fact, the nice, neat, safe modern playground does. It has three times the injury rate of the dangerous looking adventure playground. (Gill, 2018)

Professor Ball's explanation for this is that when children know an environment is safe, they will go to extraordinary lengths to compensate by playing irresponsibly.

Perhaps also, when children know there ARE dangers, they might take a little more care.

If this is the case, what possible benefit could such a natural risk-taking tendency

have for us humans?

Could it be that everyday risk taking helps us learn about our environment and develop confidence in dealing with it? Could trying to protect people all the time actually be making them less confident, less able to master their environment?

Mark Tremblay of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Canada says 'We are protecting kids to such an extreme that they have no confidence in themselves... Mental health issues, the tsunami of our time, are horrible. Children are on screens all the time, becoming anxious and depressed. This happens a lot more than kids getting eaten by grizzlies or hit by lightning. Grass stains are what childhood is supposed to be about. A grazed knee is an asset, not a liability.' (Whipple, 2018)

There is a growing trend for people to believe that everyone needs to take control of their lives to get out of their toxic, air conditioned indoor environments, to get outside into the fresh air and to make their own mistakes. Even in Canada, where it is freezing cold, and there really are grizzly bears.

Professor Ellen Sandseter of Queen Maud University College in Trondheim, Norway believes that the purpose of risky play in children may be to make life both less risky and less scary. Writing on Sandseter's work, Tom Whipple comments that the thrill children get from confronting mild fear (such as climbing a tree) provides them with skills and confidence to face the tasks that they will encounter in adult life. Missing out on this sort of adventure can lead to phobias and anxiety because our 'fear system has not been trained' (Whipple, 2018)

In any case, the most common risk factors in adventure is not in the environment, but in the behaviour of the person.

Flourish Australia's approach to risk

Under our Recovery Action Framework, one of Flourish Australia's eight organisational accountabilities is that: 'Our services will be person-led, supporting people to make individual

choices focusing on their strengths, their desires and potential to change and learn.' (RichmondPRA, 2014) None of this comes without risk.

If risk can be valuable, how do we as an organisation approach risk, and how do we balance it with our duty of care towards staff, volunteers, students, visitors and the people who access our services?

In the short term, we have a responsibility to promote safety, to reduce harm, and to fulfil our duty not to be careless or negligent. Flourish Australia recognises that self-determination is a vital part of a person's mental health recovery journey. It has been documented that 'dignity of risk,' exercising one's right to take informed and calculated risks, may assist a person to develop, grow and be more independent. This is a valuable aspect of the recovery journey

In the long term, therefore, our objective is to 'help the person appraise and manage their own safety.'

We aim to do this in the least restrictive manner possible, thereby providing both a safe service and a service that allows people to stretch themselves as their recovery journey progresses. (Flourish

Australia, 2016)

Risk in practice

When we talk about 'risk' here, we are not talking about base jumping from the top of Sydney Tower. We are talking about the risks To give an example, a person who accesses our Goulburn service wanted to take part in the annual City To Surf race in Sydney last year.

There are a number of potential risks here, not the least of which is to ensure that the person is sufficiently fit to participate. However, risks can be seen as guideposts to our goal, not as barriers to it. So after some planning, the trip was made and the goal realised. We hope to bring you the full story soon in Panorama, of course!

A person who accesses our service at Katoomba has recently learned to drive again after a lengthy break from it due to being unwell. They had been dissuaded from driving due to hospitalisation and medication.

Many of our readers will know that

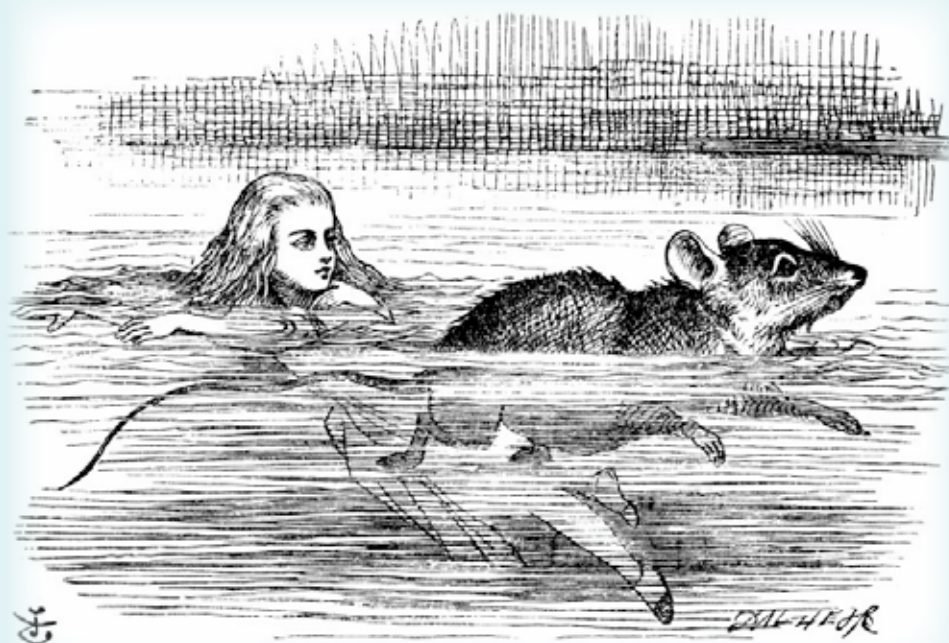
when you are on large doses of certain medications, doctors will often discourage you from driving as the medication will put you 'over the limit.' Unfortunately, the doctors sometimes forget to encourage you to return to driving when that becomes viable again. The freedom of being able to drive yourself around is something that many of us need to regain, if we can.

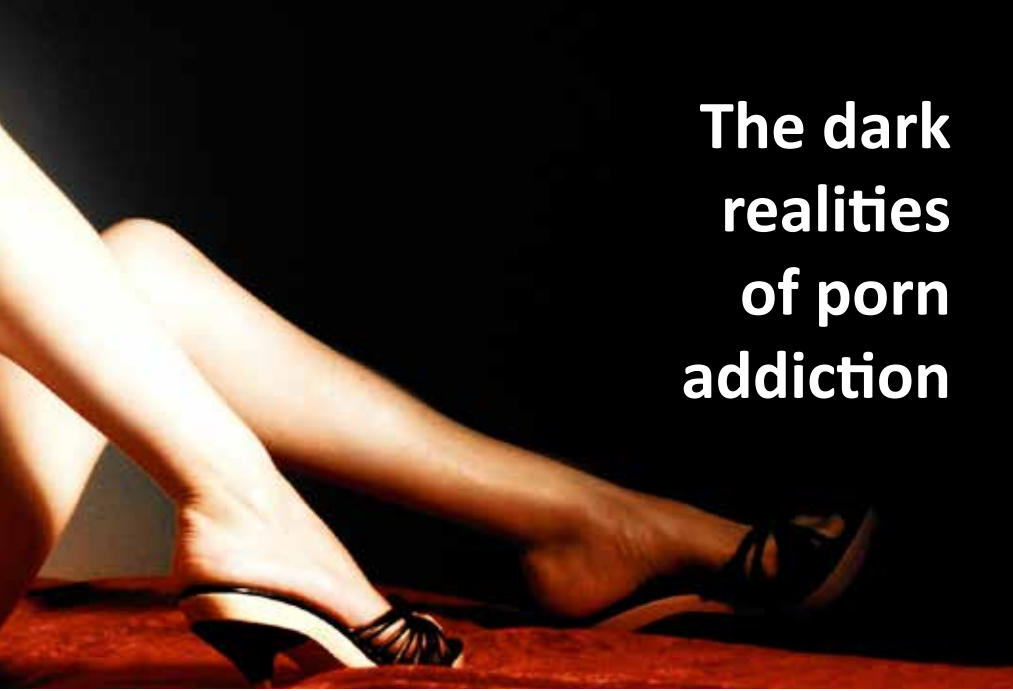
The quote 'better a broken arm than a broken spirit' is from Lady Allen of Hurtwood, 1968

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BELOW: Alice stretches herself by leaving her comfort zone and learning to swim with a friend. DRAWING BY SIR JOHN TENNIEL FROM LEWIS CARROLL'S 'ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND'





The dark realities of porn addiction

Grant J Everett

Now that we all carry high-speed Internet in our pockets, porn is easier to access than ever before. According to Dr GH Brenner, the Pornhub website had over 23 billion visits and 92 billion video views in 2017 alone, making it one of the most accessed websites on the planet. Young people, in particular, are accessing pornography earlier and earlier in their psychosexual development. In a fast, impersonal world, porn's instant gratification can be very appealing. But are there consequences?

Sex creates chemical and psychological bonds, and watching pornography forms a similar link. Bonding with a screen can undermine the feelings of attachment and intimacy you get with flesh-and-blood humans. Also, according to Relationships Australia and the National Counseling Service, one in five Australian couples will battle intimacy and trust issues triggered by porn. In the 2018 paper "Till Porn Do Us Part?", Perry and Schleifer surveyed 2,120 married adults for several years and found that the odds of divorce doubled if a spouse starts viewing porn behind the other's back. Within a committed relationship, this can be interpreted as infidelity.

Like anything addictive, porn can be a way to deal with difficult emotions like fear, anger, stress, frustration, loneliness, shame and boredom. In the short term it might provide a degree of relief, but addictive things have the tendency to worm their way deeper and deeper. According to a 2015 study in Behavioral Science, the EEG readings of someone watching porn are similar to those of a drug user viewing drugs and drug

paraphernalia. Hallmarks of a porn addiction include being consumed with thoughts of porn even when not viewing it, watching it in situations where getting caught is possible, feeling ashamed, guilty or depressed about indulging in it, continuing to watch it despite how much harm it causes, keeping it a secret from partners or spouses, losing track of time when viewing it, and trying and failing to quit. Porn addiction can also lead to actual sex becoming less satisfying.

Future innovations like virtual reality and tactile feedback hardware seem destined to make graphic adult material even more tempting.

A study at The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction found 9 percent of habitual porn viewers have unsuccessfully attempted to stop watching it. The Kinsey Institute also recorded a greater-than-average incidence of erectile dysfunction and lowered libido among men who watch porn ("Is Internet Porn Making Young Men Impotent?", E J Dickson). In the 2018 paper "Personal Pornography Viewing and Sexual Satisfaction: A Quadratic Analysis", a study of 1,500 young adults found a definite correlation between higher frequencies of porn use leading to lower levels of sexual satisfaction overall. Even if the person taking part in the study only watched porn a few times a year, there seemed to be a lasting, measurable effect (Grant Hilary Brenner MD, March 5th 2018).

According to *Your Brain on Porn* author Gary Wilson, watching porn spurs your

brain to release dopamine. As this is how drug addiction works, excessively "wringing" the old gray matter can cause issues down the track. Also, over time, a porn addiction will require increasing intensities of stimulation to achieve the same effect. In a 2012 survey of 1,500 males who watch porn, 56% said their tastes had become "increasingly extreme or deviant" over time, and they'd escalated to types of porn that would normally have unsettled them or gone against their values. This leads to what Dr Abraham Morgentaler, Associate Clinical Professor of Urology at Harvard Medical School, "porn-induced erectile dysfunction."

According to the *Fight The New Drug* website, a number of studies linked excessive porn use to spikes in feelings of depression, anxiety and stress, as well as social problems. Fight The New Drug also stated that after watching porn, men tend to feel less satisfied with their partners' appearance, sexual performance and levels of affection.

Is pornography affecting your functioning, how you feel about yourself, or harming your relationships? You might want to consider whether you'd be better off without it. Embarrassment and shame are the biggest barriers to seeking help with addiction, but with support it's possible to understand what's driving you. Psychologists and counselors can help in developing useful tools. For instance, one solution is to download a parental locking app onto your phone to prevent it from being able to access adult material. If you get somebody you trust to set the password and keep it a secret from you, you can remove this device as a source of temptation.

"Till Porn Do Us Part? A Longitudinal Examination of Pornography Use and Divorce", The Journal of Sex Research, Samuel L. Perry & Cyrus Schleifer (2018)

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fightthenewdrug.org/overview



MONEYRAMA

Decluttering for Dollars

By Grant J Everett

Recently decluttered your spare room and want to make a few dollars from the goods you unearthed? You have two options: sell your goods face-to-face, or over a distance. The ADVANTAGES of selling face-to-face include not having to worry about calculating postage, and if an item is difficult to transport you can specify that it is available by pickup only. The DISADVANTAGE of selling face-to-face instead of over a distance is you will have access to a smaller customer base. Whichever method you choose, you don't need to be an expert to flog off a few chairs and an unused fondue set.

Here are some of your selling options.

Classifieds

Paper-based Classifieds have been around for a long time and they still work, but they've also moved with the times by going online. Online Classifieds like Gumtree, the Trading Post website and Craigslist are very popular ways to sell second-hand goods. While it's often free to list cheaper items on Classifieds websites depending on their price and other factors, if you want your ad to be more visible, you'll need to pay.

www.gumtree.com.au

www.tradingpost.com.au

sydney.craigslist.org

Garage sales

You know how it works: set up some tables on your lawn, put up some signs, and don't forget to advertise it online. Gazza's Garage Sales website, for in-

stance, has plenty of great advice on the subject, as well as resources.

www.gazzasgaragesales.com.au/advertise-garage-sale

Markets

If inviting random strangers to your living room doesn't appeal, renting a market stall is a good alternative. Local Classifieds can tell you everything you need to know about the market scene. It might be worth seeing if there are specialised markets for your goods, such as the *My Kids Market NSW* for selling second-hand children's clothes. The downside is you need to transport the goods yourself and have to pay a fee for a stall, and you might end up having to take it all back home.

www.mykidsmarketnsw.com.au

Local second-hand dealers

Traditionally, pawn shops might be a quick way to sell something, but they will often pay a lot less than the other methods in this article.

Need to figure out how much postage will cost based on destination, weight and dimensions? Check out the "Calculate Postage" button on the Auspost website for an exact price. Keep in mind that overseas postage can cost way more than domestic!

auspost.com.au/

eBay

"eBay" is synonymous with selling second hand stuff online, and your potential customer base is truly massive. However, make sure you understand all the fees and charges that are involved. Use good photos, write a clear description of your item, and put your goods under the correct category so people can find them. If you're selling multiple items, offer combined postage.

www.ebay.com.au

Facebook

Facebook can be used for more than sharing pics of Grumpy Cat. It can be a good way to sell your unwanted gear, either through an existing market page or by making and promoting your own page.

www.facebook.com/marketplace

Online booksellers

You can sell books on websites like Amazon and Fishpond either one book at a time, setting a price for each item, or asking the website to sell a big box of them on your behalf. The latter option is easier, but not as profitable. There aren't any fees for listing your books, but be sure you understand how the charges and commission system works before signing up.

www.fishpond.com.au

www.amazon.com.au

Specialty websites

You can sell goods through many specialised second hand websites like Co-Op for TAFE textbooks, Stillwhite for wedding dresses, Cars Guide for vehicles, or Etsy for arts and crafts.

www.coop.com.au/sell-textbooks

www.stillwhite.com.au

www.carsguide.com.au

www.etsy.com/au/market/australia

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"10 ways to sell your stuff and make extra cash", Melissa Goodwin

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How to wait well

Patience, they say is a virtue,
but it's also a necessity

ABOVE: Carry the latest issue of Panorama with you everywhere you go and you will discover that even the most annoying waits will be highly productive.

PHOTO OF THE READER'S CHAIR, EASTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY CHILDREN'S SECTION BY WARREN HEGGARTY

By Warren Heggarty

No one likes to wait, but sometimes waiting is unavoidable. What can you do to get yourself through the waiting period without losing your cool?

Panorama heard a story about Mick who had busted his knee playing footy on Saturday waited in Emergency until Monday to have his knee treated. Fortunately Mick, being Mick didn't mind dozing in a hospital for two and a half days. Many others would have lost their cool!

Whether it is right or wrong, fair or unfair, being made to wait is common and unavoidable. This is why we need to learn how to wait well. If Mick had done his block and abused the staff for making him such a low priority, he might not have been seen at all. You've probably seen those signs in hospitals 'Aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated in this health service.' I sometimes get angry just reading that sign...

Reasons why is waiting so painful

1. Anxiety because of uncertainty. Have I passed my exam? Was I successful for the interview? Is my medical test positive? Will Sarah actually hear my voice message and ring me back?
2. Fear about a possible negative outcome. If I fail my exam I am ruined. This job was my best chance. If I have a serious illness I won't be able to cope!

Sarah won't ring because she doesn't like me!

3. Not recognising that every cloud has a silver lining. That exam proved that accountancy is not my calling. I didn't like the interviewer and would prefer not to work for her! If I actually have a serious illness then I will be able to concentrate on treating it instead of just worrying. If Sarah doesn't like me I guess Margaret does and she's kind of cute!

What you can do

A/Prof Kate Sweeny of the University of California-Riverside, has studied the psychology of waiting and has some tips for people who are waiting for an outcome which is uncertain. (Ross-Pomeroy, 2014)

Rule 1. Distract yourself from uncertainty. Read an enthralling book, watch a captivating movie, play a video game that transports you to another realm. Do things totally irrelevant to the situation.

Rule 2. Manage your expectations. There are two ways to do this: brace for the worst or hope for the best, and both have their merits, although the optimistic choice seems to work better for people in the long run.

Rule 3. Look for the silver lining in all outcomes. Expectation plays a huge role in life satisfaction, so generally, when people come to terms with their new predicament, they're able to redefine

their personal measures of happiness. **Rule 4. Keep perspective** regarding the news. Consult with friends, family, and experts to ascertain the ramifications of potentially bad news. Evaluate how important the moment truly is in the grand scheme of things.

Rule 5. Plan ahead for the consequences of bad news. Take steps to make your life easier should the disastrous outcome you're dreading actually come to pass. For example, if you're waiting on news from the doctor about whether or not surgery is required for some malady think about what gear you will need to pack for the hospital stay.

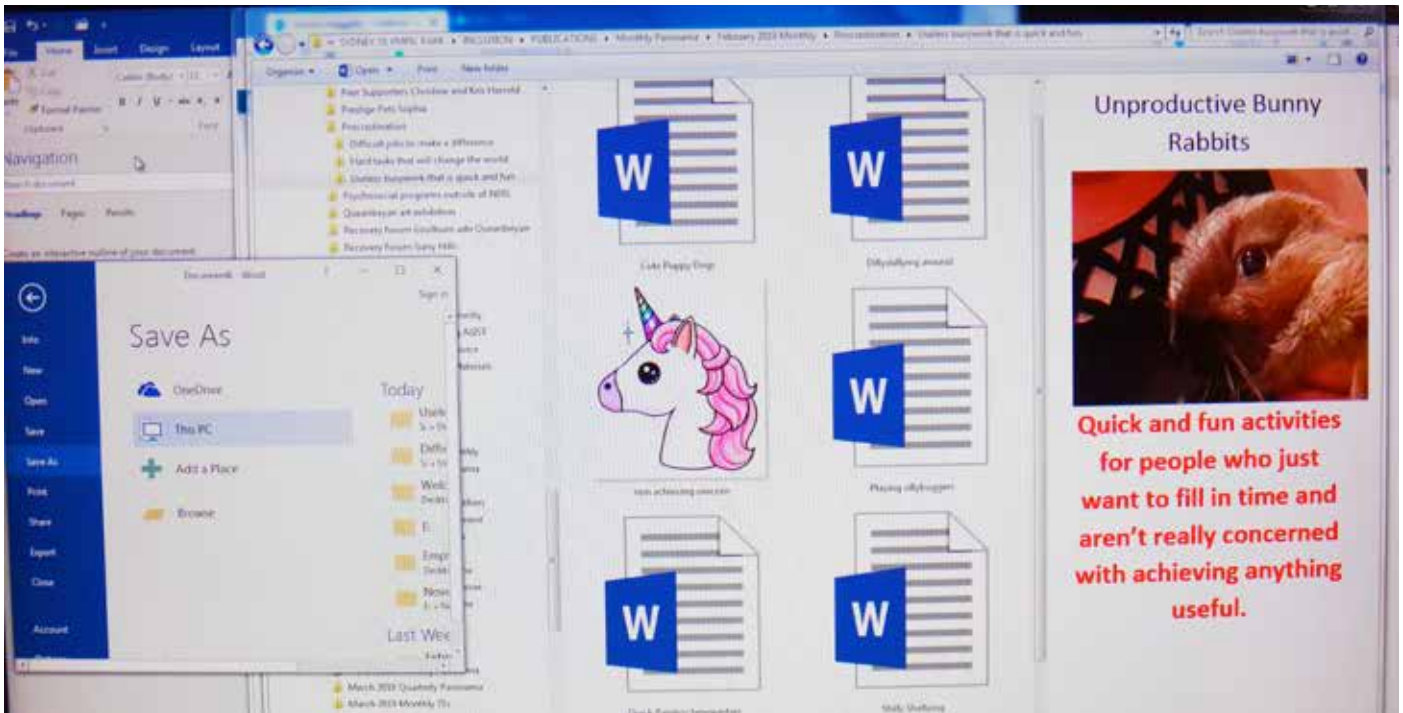
Jacinta applies the rules

Jacinta broke her foot and had a follow up appointment to see whether it was healing OK. She had an appointment with the orthopaedic surgeon at 3:00 PM at the hospital. She waited until 7:30 PM that night and instead of seeing the actual surgeon all she got was a junior doctor. In a ten minute consultation she was told 'you're doing OK, but you can't drive for another two weeks.'

It would have seemed a wasted day, but Jacinta has had experience with this and knew what to expect (Rule 4). When she made the appointment she asked if delays were common and was told sometimes people waited 'a couple of hours' (Rule 2). So, she brought some things with her to distract herself and keep her mind occupied (Rule 1). For example she had some work she had been unable to do because of constant interruptions, but the waiting room was the perfect environment to work on her lap top (Rule 3). She rang up a friend while waiting and complained, and the friend put it into perspective 'it's Friday, they get a lot of car accident victims on Friday evening, at least you're not one of them!' (Rule 4).'

It wasn't a pleasant experience, but with a bit of planning and the right mindset, it didn't turn out to be as bad a wait as it could have been. Sometimes you need to remind yourself why the wait is worth it. You can avoid the wait by not taking action on a problem. But you will inevitably have a worse situation to deal with. If waiting for minor surgery worries you, cancelling it will set you up for an even bigger worry: major surgery, after an even longer period of waiting.

REFERENCE: Ross-Pomeroy in Forbes Magazine <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rosspomeroy/2014/03/19/5-tips-on-how-to>



Procrastination How soon is now?

After weeks of dithering and delay, Warren Heggarty finally got round to completing this article on procrastination. But is it now too late?

'I'm not ready for it.' This is a common response to questions about looking for a job or pursuing some other worthwhile aim on our recovery journeys. The obvious response to this is 'When will you be ready?' Perhaps even 'What do you need to do to make yourself ready for it?' However, people can answer as vaguely as they like: 'later, after I do a TAFE course, when I am less stressed, when I fix this problem with my medication.' Everything can be made to disappear in a cloud of vagueness for which no one is accountable.

When is 'what if...?'

What if you NEVER did that TAFE course? What if you are NEVER less stressed? What if you NEVER fix the problem with your medication? Will you therefore wait an eternity in limbo? Perhaps you are procrastinating, that is, deferring to the future something that should be done now.

Whether the cause is fear of failure or even fear of success, procrastination is a problem for many of us because it stops us from making progress, including progress on our recovery journeys. Burka and Yuen's Book 'Procrastination, Why you do it, What to do about it NOW' first came out in 1983 and went on to have a 25th Anniversary edition. However it might never have seen the light of day, because its authors freely admit that they procrastinated on it.

Burka and Yuen make it clear that they see constant, problematic procrastination as a major enemy rather than a nuisance, because it is a kind of defence mechanism against fear. 'They fear that if they act, their actions could get them into trouble. They worry that if they show who they really are, there will be dangerous consequences to face. They are afraid, underneath all the disorganisation and delay, that they are unacceptable, so much so that they may hide not only from the world but even from themselves.' (Burka & Yuen, 1983; 2008, p. 17)

For some of us, this fear has a pretty extreme effect. 'When they are disappointed by their performance on a task, they think not only that they have failed on that task, but also that they have failed as a person' (Burka & Yuen, 1983; 2008, p. 20)

'People who worry about being judged as inadequate or unworthy, usually are afraid that is exactly what they are...' say Burka and Yuen. 'They fear they are

unlovable. Who could love me if I have nothing to offer?... [they] think that their ability... will determine whether or not they deserve to be loved.' (p. 22)

What to do about it.

Let's look at two chains of procrastination. Delay in getting a drivers' licence and delay in getting a medical check up. These stories, incidentally, are REAL.

Wilbur's experiences exemplify two types of procrastination. In one case, he is frightened that learning more about his health condition will make things worse for him, a viewpoint that doesn't stack up to reason. Increasing worry forces him to discover the truth. In the second case, it is a fear of failure. Not having ever had a licence means that one can at least reserve any judgement on his driving ability. But not having a licence is taking its toll.

In both cases, a decision to bite the bullet and take action lead to empowerment. 'Procrastination is the thief of time' the saying goes, but had he not been lucky, in Wilbur's case it might have stolen his life!

In the next instalment we will look at how making your sense of self worth dependent upon your performance can actually work against you and lead to procrastination that stops you in your tracks.



Prestige Pets!

Aww! Who doesn't love pets? Contact Prestige Pets and share your pet story in
Panorama (02) 9393 9021, Panorama@flourishaustralia.org.au



Hay Bunny!



ABOVE Sophia the rabbit is a queen, I mean, a keen nibbler and goes into trance like states when stroked in the correct manner. PHOTOS BY MEL THE BUNNY MOTHER

By Mel the Bunny Mother

Sophia is my Baby. Sophia is a cute little dwarf bunny. She's very small. I fought for custody over her with my sister and I won. Now I'm never going to give her up.

Sophia is a very spoilt bunny. She has the best cage. She has the best food. She has the best hay. She has the best toys.

I like giving her the best. I want her to be happy and well looked after.

Whilst she's definitely cute and cuddly she can be naughty.

She loves to chew electrical cords. I had a brand new \$120.00 Christmas tree with inbuilt lights. I was so proud of my Christmas tree.

Then just before Christmas I found that the lights didn't work. Sophia had been running free in the house for two hours before that. She already had a big habit of chewing electrical cords. Yes there had been some serious chord fraying

going on behind my TV set, until she learned the out of bounds rule in our household. Whenever she strays out of bounds I say sternly: "SOPHIA!"

And she goes away. It is a wonder my TV still works though!

So on this occasion I was devastated to find that Sophia the bunny had chewed through the Christmas tree's electrical cable. Dad said it was lucky that it didn't start a fire, but it was switched off at the time. I never let Sophia play unsupervised where she could come to any harm. Never.

My friend Kris, who has a HUMAN baby suggested that to prevent this sort of thing in future I ought to get a PLAYPEN. But I am sure Sophia would either a) jump out of it or b) chew her way out.

Eventually I was able to purchase some cordless, battery powered Christmas lights. A King Charles spaniel I know actually got a collar of battery powered Christmas lights to wear round his neck, and that worked out OK too. There is a solution to every pet problem!

Commitment!

Rabbits need lots of care and lots of handling and attention, more than a puppy dog they say, and that means they cost a lot in terms of your time and your money. They need commitment!

- Rabbits need lots of clean hay
- Rabbits need lots of clean water
- Rabbits need lots of toys to gnaw because their teeth keep growing and they need to keep gnawing things.
- Keep your electrical cords etc out of the way.
- A bored rabbit is a menace.



The following video is a good summary of how to look after a bunny. There are many such videos and there are lots of differing opinions about the finer points. So if in doubt, ask an expert, namely a vet. "Rabbit dos and don'ts" posted by Mickey and Friends on 9 July 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2doJqE2eAR4>

Sophia is very clever for a rabbit. She learns my tactics and tricks for capturing her and putting her back in her cage. So I have to keep developing new strategies.

She gives the best cuddles. She loves it when you stroke her head. She goes into this little rabbit trance when you do that.

The downside is hay. I find bits of hay all around the house. I found some hay in my bed the other night and Sophia isn't even allowed to go upstairs to the bedrooms! But she's worth it.

Electricians install, maintain, repair, test and commission electrical and electronic equipment. They work in factories, businesses and homes. They may also work on electricity transmission and distribution ('poles and wires' and so forth). (Jobguide, 2014)

To become an electrician you usually have to complete an apprenticeship or traineeship in a field such as Electrotechnology Electrician. Entry requirements vary but personal qualities include:

- Enjoy mathematical and technical activities
- Good hand-eye coordination
- Good eyesight (with glasses) and normal colour vision
- Logical thinking and the ability to figure out problems.
- Able to do precise and detailed work safely
- Able to work independently, for example working alone for a householder.
- Able to work as part of a team for example working with other electricians or tradespeople on a building site.
- Able to cope with the physical demands of the job which may include
 - o Working at heights (including on roofs, towers and masts)
 - o Working in enclosed, confined spaces
 - o Standing for long periods
- Good communication skills. Some electricians have a great deal of contact with members of the public

You can watch videos about this and other trades and occupations on the SKILLS ONE site.

Figuring it all out

You can find a number of videos on the skills one site that will give you an introduction to electrical or electronics work. Luke who is doing a Certificate III says that 'you have to have an inquisitive sense of what makes this work and if it doesn't work how do I make it work.' (TAFE)

Nick says, 'When I came to TAFE I slowly got the knowledge then realised this is something I could do...it's never

Electricians & Electronics and Communications tradespeople

By Warren Heggarty

the same thing. It's always different. Something might break... and you have to look at the drawings and try to figure out how it works and how you're going to fix it. (TAFE)

Alongside other trades

Electricians don't always work in isolation. To illustrate how they mesh with other trades, take fire protection in a theatre. There are two basic sides to fire protection, Wet (eg. sprinklers) and Dry (eg. alarms). There are also inspectors whose job it is to conduct evacuation drills and be on stand by in the case of shows that have pyrotechnics. (Electricals (Property Services at the Capitol Theatre))

In addition there are engineers and others who design the sprinkler systems, the alarm systems and the evacuation plans. Electricians with a Certificate III work amongst all these people as well as the people who do air conditioning, lighting and so forth. (Fire Services/Fire Warden (Property services at the Capitol Theatre))

Theatre))

Mathematics

A lot of people might be daunted by this requirement, but remember, the mathematics has a practical application to your trade. The fundamentals of maths for electricians can be found here <https://www.mikeholt.com/instructor2/img/product/pdf/1302643872-sample.pdf>

It includes both mathematical and electrical formulas (like Ohm's Law). Don't be surprised if it looks a bit difficult. That's because you haven't learnt it yet!

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Employers Are Crying Out For PUNCTUALITY



We often hear about how employers are looking for people with a particular quality but can't find anyone. This series hopes to give our readers the edge over the competition.

By Warren Heggarty

Why is it that employers cry out for people who are punctual, people who turn up on time, every time? Most likely it is to do with respect. Being punctual shows that you respect the other person's time, and as our lives are measured in time, by extension it shows you respect the whole person. Especially if that person is PAYING you to be on time.

There is an interesting anecdote, on the Art of Manliness web site (McKay & McKay, *A Man is Punctual: The Importance of Being on Time*, 2012) about first US president, General George Washington, who was very punctual. As a youth he was drilled in The Rules of Civility and took it all very seriously. He considered a person's punctuality to be a sign of how much they respected others.

In some cultures, such as Pacific Islands, there is a different approach to time and therefore punctuality. There, one shows

respect in other ways. In Australia, however, punctuality is essential for people who desire employment. Older people (more likely to be your employer) are especially keen on punctuality. They were born before mobile phones were invented. You couldn't reschedule things with a quick phone call 20 years ago. If you promised to be at the Town Hall steps by 5pm, you had to be there or people would worry. Besides, unless you had good reason for the delay, you have broken your word and that does not reflect well on you. If you arrive at 5:15pm an apology is in order!

But just because nowadays you can use your gadgets to reschedule the moveable feast of your life at short notice, that doesn't mean you SHOULD. You need to think of the impression you are making on other people. If those other people are going to be paying you, they need to know you are reliable and consistent. The best way to demonstrate this is to turn up on time.

Think about this - if you cannot organise your own time, how can you expect someone to trust you to organise anything? If you prove that you can organise your time, it shows others that you are dependable and that increases your self-confidence. Arriving early for an appointment allows you to avoid the

panic that often accompanies the tardy and disorganised.

So how can you become punctual? Firstly, if you are unpunctual you need to find out why. Again, The Art of Manliness goes into some depth on this. (McKay & McKay, *A Man Is Punctual: The Reasons You Are Late and How to Always be on Time*, 2012)

In brief, you may misperceive the passage of time or you may underestimate how long things will take (almost everyone does this!). A lot of people are overly optimistic about the flow of time, others are procrastinators.

There are quite a number of other reasons, some of them quite impolite (being deliberately late is a way of getting back at people) but to cure the problem you need to commit to changing your behaviour. If your problem is particularly severe, you need to look at what you do during the day, how long it takes you, and what your "choke points" are.

Perhaps you need to develop more realistic ideas about time, about how long things take, about how poor public transport is, and so forth. You can help the situation by always aiming to be early. It is much better to be early than late. Being TOO early for an appointment or for starting work shows that you have nothing much going on in your life. Sometimes, being early might make your host feel responsible for entertaining you for that extra time! This is why some recommend arrival a sensible five or fifteen minutes before the appointed hour. You can use the spare time to entertain yourself by doing something constructive...like reading Panorama!

Whatever the cause of your unpunctuality, if you remedy it, you will turn yourself into ONE OF THE PUNCTUAL PEOPLE THAT EMPLOYERS ARE CRYING OUT FOR!

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Overcoming Automation Anxiety



ABOVE: In today's employment environment, 'a lot has devolved back on to individuals to make their own way, and that's a stressful and demanding thing.' Especially when robots are after your job, but there is something you can do. PICTURE FROM PIXABAY

By Warren Heggarty

Some people in the industry claim that, because of automation, in the next 15 years about half of the jobs that currently exist could disappear. 'Catastrophising' is easy to do, but is there any real cause for alarm?

According to a panel of experts at a recent business and training event, if we start looking at technology as an enabler rather than a threat, we might see a future that is not so worrying after all! The event was part of the Enterprise Series, sponsored by The Australian newspaper in partnership with TAFE NSW.

The general consensus was that 'adaptability' is the quality for thriving in a quickly changing future employment market. Andrew Charlton of AlphaBeta suggested people get skills that 'complement' automation, that is, skills that machines can't carry out: the

...we should take practical steps right now to put ourselves in a better position to face the increased need for adaptability.

creative, cognitive and interpersonal skills. (Duncan, 2018) Employers were very keen on characteristics like punctuality, persistence, creativity, resilience, empathy, teamwork and collaboration. Professor Lyn Craig from the University of Melbourne said concerns about automation were 'overblown.' However the circumstances for individuals will change. At the moment, people tend to be employed by 'continuous contract' but in future there could be more emphasis on 'employment by task.'

That means that instead of having one employer who gets them to do many

tasks, an employee might have many employers who get them to do individual projects. (Hewett, 2018)

Prof Craig told The Australian 'A lot has devolved back on to individuals to make their own way and that's a stressful and demanding thing that some people feel more capable of than others.'

Panorama has previously reported that employers are not keen on spending money on training their own workers. This pushes the cost onto either individuals or the taxpayer. Nicholas Davis wrote in The Australian 'the employees most at risk of disruption are the least likely to be supported by the businesses they work for.' (Davis, 2018) Mr Charlton said that in future a lot 'will depend on the ... workers' own initiative to find the training courses, to pay for the training courses and ... accrue debt to be retrained and then find a job.'

Reflecting the idea of 'employment by task' or 'employment by project' is 'piece by piece learning' or 'spot learning'. If an employer wants a lamb chop, they are not going to buy a whole sheep. So if an employee needs a skill covered in one unit of a TAFE certificate, why not do just that one unit instead of the whole certificate?

Mr Davis, who is 'head of society and innovation at the World Economic Forum' suggests that people should be 'running towards disruption rather than trying to avoid it.' He insists that we should take practical steps right now to put ourselves in a better position to face the increased need for adaptability. So 'which online course are you taking later today' he asks the readers of his article. (Davis, 2018)

If you're worried there won't be any jobs for you, take heart. Nicholas Davis gives the example that Australia will need 18,000 more cyber security experts by 2026. Currently about 500 suitable professionals are being graduated each year. That's a shortfall of 14,000. The question is, what is a 'cyber security expert' and what do you need to do to qualify as one. We'll leave that with you for now.

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"I got this new job through word-of-mouth."



ABOVE: Tricia hard at work at Marrickville PHOTO BY GRANT J EVERETT

My Scanner Has Become My Best Buddy!

By Tricia H

When we first met Tricia, she was splitting her time between being a receptionist at Flourish Australia's Head Office and volunteering with the National Breast Cancer Foundation and a nursing home. Since then, Tricia has moved on from Head Office. And while everyone was sad to see her go, it wasn't long before Tricia started a new, exciting job at Flourish Australia's Marrickville service. She told Panorama magazine all about this new chapter of her career - Editor

I work in the Scanning Room at Marrickville as part of a team with Michael and Adam. My job is to scan documents into the system, and this involves tasks like keeping a record of my work and making sure the equipment is used safely. There's always something to keep me busy, but I enjoy my job so much that I don't mind. My scanner has become my

best buddy!

My time with Flourish Australia has taught me many valuable skills that will be very useful in the future. I learned a fantastic amount at Sydney Olympic Park with June (receptionist) and Julie (Administration manager), and I've already picked up a thing or two at Marrickville, too.

"Anything that gets you out of bed and out of the house is very important."

For instance, when I'm scanning I know there can't be any metal items like staples or paper clips in the documents, as they can wreck the machine. Sometimes I might find one or two staples hidden deep within a pile of paper, so I need to be very careful. Some of those documents are an inch thick, so that's a lot to separate and check. I also have to account for every item I scan into the system by labeling them to confirm they've been uploaded.

I got this new job through word-of-mouth. Around the time I finished at Sydney Olympic Park, I learned there was an opening at Marrickville. As this is quite far from where I live - about

an hour and a half each way - the main question was whether I was willing to travel so far. I decided it was worth it, so I'm up at 5 o'clock so I can get to work by 7:30. I'm currently working Wednesdays and Fridays, but hopefully I'll increase my days at some point. At the moment, I'm fine with two. I'm still doing one day a week at the nursing home, where I play the piano for the elderly residents, which I've been doing for two and a half years now.

This new job has been a great opportunity to meet people, and some of the new friends I've met include Warwick, Robert, Bao the supervisor and Lisa in the top office, and I'm gradually getting to know all the other members of the team, too. The ten o'clock morning tea upstairs is a good chance to socialise over a coffee and a biscuit.

While I love my job, it's possible that I might change fields again at some point. I was a music teacher for 25 years, which is a really long time, so I could go back to that. I taught my first three students - the daughters of one of my mum's colleagues - at the age of 15. My mum was a teacher, too, but she's retired now.

I really enjoy working here. Everyone is super encouraging and supportive, and I'm very grateful for that. I cannot believe that this is my sixth week here already. Time has just flown.

EMPLOYMENT & YOU...

Are you living with a mental health issue?

**Would you like to get back to work
but feel unsure about where to start?**

Flourish Australia Community Businesses support people living with a mental health issue to take part in meaningful employment.

Whilst providing employment support in areas of lawn maintenance, packing & business services we meet strict service standards to ensure real employment outcomes.

Employees of the community businesses have access to one-on-one support from our peer workers and the option to attend our onsite recovery groups that cover a range of vocational and life skills topics.

We also offer tertiary qualifications onsite, including:
Cert. 3 in Warehouse Operations and Cert. 3 in Horticulture.

When you feel you are ready to enter the open workforce, we are here to support you with the transition.

***Flourish Australia is a registered
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider.***

**We
support
the NDIS**

OUR CURRENT JOBS AVAILABLE

Prestige Packing Harris Park:

Supported jobs in packing and light assembly.

Marrickville Business:

Supported jobs in packing and light assembly and scanning and document management services.

Flourish Maintenance St Marys:

Supported jobs in lawn mowing, grounds maintenance and professional cleaning services.

Flourish Maintenance Warwick Farm:

Supported jobs in lawn mowing, grounds maintenance and professional cleaning services.

To find out more or to APPLY: Phone: 02 9393 9000 Email: clare.evans@flourishaustralia.org.au

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