

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

panorama

Quarterly Issue December 2018

CAPTAIN'S
QUARTERS

Pirates



- It's great to be busy!
- Getting past the dark times
- Never give up hope
- The six virtues of model boat building

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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.

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

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snail mail. You can read your
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Never give up hope:
you will get there!

Anthony Plunkett has been attending our Buckingham House Day2Day Living Centre at Surry Hills for about 4 years, and he tries to make it there Monday to Friday every week. Tony volunteers to keep the facilities clean, and he also takes the lunch orders and helps out in the kitchen when it's short staffed, and especially likes showing people how to use the machines in Buck House's awesome gym. Be sure to let him know if you need help pumping iron!

Making new friends at Buckingham House

I first learned about Buck House during one of my many hospital admissions. After deciding to give it a try, it wasn't long until attending the programs became a major part of my routine. Going to Buck House is often what gets me out of bed in the morning, and I even go when I'm feeling flat. Seeing the staff and other members can really help to pick me up when I need it.

Attending Buck House has been a great way to learn how to make friends. I'm

still getting used to talking more openly with people, as it can take me a while to build trust and lower my shields. I've found that the more I get to know somebody, the easier it is to share a deeper friendship. I know how to show people the right amount of respect, and that's an important part of any relationship. And while I enjoy talking with my friends at Buck House about everything from movies to football, I'm also learning how to talk about mushy stuff, which isn't easy.

Another reason I enjoy socialising with the other members (sometimes even outside of the usual Buck House running times) is that it's a great opportunity to be supportive of their mental health issues. Of course, I always treat people as people, not as an illness. Being able to help the other members to build on their confidence is also very fulfilling and gives me a sense of meaning, and I like to try and make people's lives easier whenever I can.

Attending the recovery groups is one of my favourite parts of going to Buck

ABOVE: Ceda in the gym with insets of Tony Plunkett at Buck House, in fancy dress, and contemplating a very high basket

House. They've taught me a lot, such as how to talk about what's bothering me instead of holding it in, which is what I always did in the past. Buck House has helped me stay on top of my recovery and progress in many areas. Looking back on when I first started attending, I've made a lot of progress and I believe my recovery journey is going really well. I started off with a lot of problems, such as not being able to relate to people, but that stuff is all very different now. I've continued to work on my recovery both inside and outside of Buck House.

The gym

And while I like ALL the programs Buck House has on offer – everything from how to cook vegetables so they're easier to eat, to how to avoid being scammed – I especially like hitting the gym. I usually work out with Ceda (Cedomir, Mental Health Worker), and he's been helping me to deal with my stressors through

Recovery Story

exercise. Other staff members have also given me a lot of support with other elements of my diet and fitness routine, and this has helped me lose weight and manage my diabetes. When I train in the gym, I find it helpful to play music to keep my stress levels down a lot.

Every day at Buck House is an active one, and I'm always learning all sorts of new things from both the members and the staff. For instance, I've learned how to deal with my stress better. The staff have taught me to take time for myself when I need it, and to not always put other people first. Sometimes I need to focus on myself, or I won't be able to help others.

I like to joke with the staff and the members at BH. Some days can be a bit stressful for anybody, so joking around can cheer up anybody who is having a bad day. I like to put a smile on people's faces and make their day a bit happier. I grew up in a boys' home instead of a family environment, so I know how to look after people.

“There's something inside me that won't give up, that keeps going even when I don't feel like it. My family and friends are a big part of what helps to me keep going.” -Anthony

Connecting with Buck House has provided opportunities to link in with other services in a consumer role, including a Masterclass at St Vincent's, a consumer advisory workshop with Being, and Take Charge with Belgravia.

Difficulties

I have two major stressors in my life: the first stressor is that I have spent a huge part of my youth in boy's homes and many of my adult years in hospitals, and the second stressor is that I've had to deal with a lot of illnesses in my family.

Despite how much time I spent in boy's homes and hospitals, I always knew that I would survive it. There's something inside me that won't give up, that keeps going even when I don't feel like it. My family and friends are a big part of what helps to me keep going. Thankfully, since I've been coming to Buck House,

I've been going to hospital less and also been thinking of harming myself less. I definitely get more value and benefits from attending Buck House than from being admitted.

Since my Father died of cancer, a lot of illness has gone through my family, and I have had to take on the role of looking after everyone. My family situation has been really hard at times. I worry a lot about all of them, and I'm especially concerned about how they would get by if I passed away, too.

My recovery journey

Looking back to when I first joined Buck House, I have come a long way in learning about my illness and achieving my goals. In addition to the recovery groups, the staff at Buck House have been able to support me in all kinds of matters. They've helped me gain a greater understanding of my own recovery, and this has allowed me to move forwards in life. For instance, when I'm feeling flat or down, I know that speaking about it with the staff will help me. My doctor has actually recommended that I should reach out to the people who run Buck House before considering any medication adjustments.

My advice about recovery is to keep working on it in whatever way you can, and you will get there. If you keep going forwards, you will get positive results. Never give up hope: you will get there.

Summing up

I appreciate Donna and all the other staff at Buck House for the support they've provided me, all the work they do to help the other members, and the impact they have with their many recovery groups. If you have had any experience with mental health issues, you should come visit Buck House, find out about the programs on offer, and let them assist you. The members are always happy to see a new face and make a new friend, so don't be shy!

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Quick facts about Tony

What do I do for fun besides Buck House?

I like going to the movies, hanging out at coffee shops, and seeing the sights in new places. One recent highlight was taking a trip down to Melbourne on the sleeper train.

What's my housing situation?

My housing situation is stable. I've lived in an apartment with my flat-mate and friend, Cheryl, for a long time. This situation works for both of us, and neither of us are planning on moving on anytime soon. We know how to support (and put up with!) each other, and it's good to have the company.

Who's in my support network?

In addition to the Buck House staff and members, my support network includes my housemate Cheryl, my local coffee shop, my doctor and my pharmacist. I have a wellness plan, and everyone is on it.

Study and work

When it comes to employment, I spent 23 years doing shift work at the Royal Women's Hospital as a hospital porter. I tried to return to open employment a while back, but it was too much for me. I'm planning to try again further down the track when I feel better prepared. When it comes to study, I'm thinking of getting my NDIS funding allocated towards improving my literacy skills.

Random fact

I'm a lifelong Manly supporter.



The Wisdom and Virtues Behind Model Boat Building - by Samuel F



1

Hi my name is Sam. I am a worker in Prestige packing in Flourish Marrickville. I have an enthusiastic desire to manufacture radio-controlled model boats.

I started working in October 2016 on the idea of a craft that I wanted to create. Something that would be operable and consistent with today's boating. My first model is a scaled down 50 foot ocean-going cabin cruiser (picture 1), with particular characteristics from boats of different cultures and countries.

It all took off for me, once I started putting in on paper, with a dynamic design (picture 4). I used naval architecture as well as history of model-boat-making when I was younger. I started drawing a life size design, that would guide my manufacturing. I drew deck-line (that's the top view) where you can see the cabin feature, you can see the cockpit (picture 2), which is where the people sit in the back. I drew the side view and underside. In here you can see above and below the water line. I drew the front view; it has proper views of the front and back views of the ship.

The first boat I ever made was when I was 14. I used to gather model boat magazines from the library and I loved reading the stories.

What is next for me? I am already working on my "Flourish Australia 3" which is a radio control yacht, and I also have plans for a motor boat and a sea rescue boat. I have already started on these designs, which are in the same context of a sting ray, which is a fish, because I was inspired by the remembrance of Steve Irwin, as being a man of great virtue with animals, and I want to dedicate it to his memory.

Six virtues

In my experience of model boat manufacturing I have learned a very important and great virtue and that is the virtue of patience. Patience is one of the six requirements in any activity.

1. To be **generous** in helping others how to build is a great goal.
2. To be very acutely **aware** of the delicacy of the craft is most important in the

ABOVE: Pride in his work. Cap'n Samuel F with his police launch as support worker Borislav Borissov looks on. PHOTO COURTESY KONNIE MAGALHAES

art of Boat Making.

3. As explained above, **patience** is one skill that's *needed to be heeded!*
4. It is necessary to **persevere** until completion.
5. To **concentrate** on the dream and re-make the craft over and over (even while sleeping!) brings the final result.
6. To be **mindful** of the final result and the satisfaction that completion will bring, is as important as ability and knowledge of technology.

This Wisdom underlays my life.

I wish to all of you who aspire to any plan or ideal to follow these six virtues and they will lead you forward. They will allow you to keep and share your skills and arts of hobbies with others. May All Be Good! Samuel

Here are some close up photos showing the many fine details of Sam's model boat. You can see that a lot of care and effort has gone into it's construction!

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KONNIE MAGALHAES.



ART ATTACK volunteer Amy gets second sculpture scholarship

By Donna Shrubsole

You may remember meeting Buckingham House member Amy Agus in June 2018 Panorama. 'It would be awesome to have an exhibition of my works one day,' Amy told us at the time. Well, now she is one step closer to that goal.

Here she is pictured with her sculpture 'Petri' after Kiakshuk (plaster owl) at the Annual Studio Exhibition at the *Tom Bass Sculpture Studio School and Clara Street Gallery* in Erskineville, near Sydney.

Over 100 pieces of work were displayed at The Annual Exhibition which was opened by the Lord Mayor of Sydney Clr. Clover Moore.

The Manager of Buckingham House Donna Shrubsole and Art Group Facilitator Jane Caveney (from Pine Street Creative Centre) attended the event to support Amy. Amy, who has a Certificate IV in Fine Arts, had been a participant in Buck House's Thursday Art Group. Later, she volunteered for the role of facilitating our Friday afternoon young adults art group ART ATTACK. She will be continuing in this role for the next quarter.

Amy had been sent a link by a staff member of Buckingham House to apply for a Scholarship with the *Tom Bass Sculpture Studio School and Clara Street Gallery*. Not only was she successful on that occasion, but now she has received a second ten week scholarship!

Getting past the dark times

...and into the flow

By Glenn Jarvis



Glenn Jarvis tells how squaring up to our challenges today can lead to big recovery benefits tomorrow.

I have been working in mental health for sixteen years, firstly for NSW Health as a consumer advocate for five years and then for Flourish Australia (and its predecessors) for eleven years as a mental health worker. Most of this has been part time with some assistance from the DSP. Things are now going reasonably well, I'm in a long term relationship and am enjoying life. Nineteen years ago, however, things were not so good. That was when I had my first experience of mental health issues.

I would like to share some strategies with you that helped me on my recovery journey over those years. They may not help everyone, but they worked for me.

After I had my first episode in 1999, I spent the next two years in and out of hospital mental health units. I had been given a diagnosis of schizophrenia. I was in my late twenties when this happened and had been working in London when I became unwell. I returned to Australia eventually and wound up unemployed and virtually friendless in my town of birth, Queanbeyan. During this time, because I was so unwell in public, it trashed my reputation and burned friendships.

Luckily my family stuck by me although I had to move out and ended up in supported accommodation where my 'best friends' were alcohol and tobacco.

LEFT: Skiing in Japan PHOTO BY GLENN JARVIS

At this time I met a lot of people through various avenues who were or had been in my position and they were pretty dark times.

During these bleak, lonely times one thing I used to enjoy was to spend \$10 a day having a beer or two at a local club. I was gradually accepted by some of the locals for turning up, listening to their problems, and not cadging drinks or smokes off them. Besides, some of them were pretty generous individuals, rough diamonds etc.

I had managed to get myself a part time job with the health service so I could afford my \$10 a day and I was developing a new purpose in trying to help other people in my position but things were not much fun and I was still very isolated socially.

One of the things that helped me overcome the isolation of my condition was sport. Sport also provided physical health benefits and fun.

“[I] found the squash so absorbing when I was on the court it was like a mini holiday from my problems.”

I was at the club and noticed a guy wearing a tracksuit who mentioned a squash club. I had played a bit of mostly social squash before. Pretty soon this guy, being persuasive, a good Samaritan and having had some dark times himself, had me in his team in the Australian Capital Territory Squash Comp.

Of course I was very unfit but we were in a lower division and gradually I started to win a few after copping some absolute floggings. They were good nights though, because I got out of my flat, was not drinking and found the squash so absorbing when I was on the court it was like a mini holiday from my problems. I ended up playing over three hundred games of comp squash.

It was always the same routine. At first I didn't want to go and play. Then when I got on the court and started, I would relax and enjoy the squash! I also enjoyed the company of my team

Recovery Story

mates and eventually opponents as I got to know more and more people in the competition.

My knee and hip started playing up so I have retired from Squash now, but I've got my name on the honour board and have many good friends from squash that I meet and socialise with regularly. Won a few pennants along the way as well which was nice.

Apart from squash and my job, something major I did to improve my quality of life was to quit smoking. My smoking had recommenced when I was hospitalised in the UK after all the horrible things that go with that. I smoked for a few years in my early twenties before my illness but quit and pumped the money into commencing sailing on the harbour in Sydney. That had been a joyous time in my life, flying around Sydney Harbour crewing on various yachts. Thus I knew I could quit but it was really hard the first time and I was even more dependent for some reason. Mental health issues and smoking: we all know the story so I won't elaborate, but I knew as well that I could improve my quality of life significantly again if I could quit.

This time my strategy was that I had been saving for a camper van for about four years after being inspired by a friend who used his to go camping and

fishing down the coast and up in the mountains. Somehow I convinced myself I could afford the van but I would not be able to afford to go anywhere unless I quit smoking. So I quit again which was an all consuming struggle for about four months, gradually getting easier but always difficult. But people I knew had quit and I myself had done it in the past so I bit the bullet and did it.

Six months later I bought the van and

“For every person who wants to discriminate against you because of your illness there are others who empathise and are ready to help.”

spent many happy evenings camped by the ocean, a month travelling around Tasmania and generally having lots of fun. When I say happy, the ghosts of my past issues are always there but you could feel a lot lighter of spirit on the road or camped somewhere after a day in the surf or fishing off the rocks.

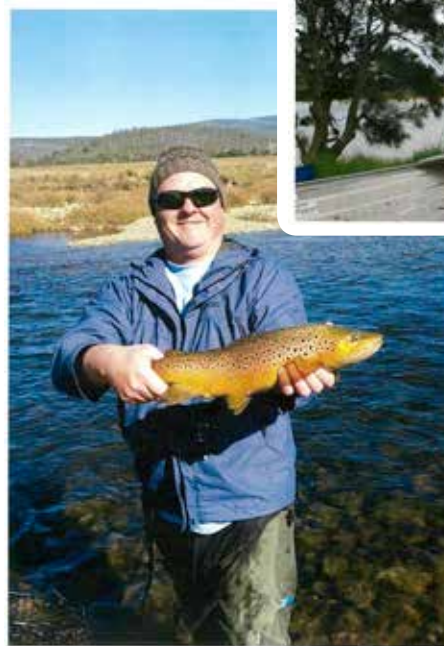
So just to recap, I always found using the funds from smoking to do something more inspiring as a way that motivated me to stop. That said, both times I quit smoking were two of the toughest times I've had and I believe people who

say it is harder to quit than heroin. It's bloody hard but I used to smoke twenty to twenty five a day and at a dollar a cigarette now I've saved myself a fortune since December the 8th 2005 when I quit. I reckon at twenty a day, 365 days a year that's over \$7,000 thousand dollars a year. My last overseas trip only cost me \$2700 so do the maths and figure out what you would prefer to do.

The third thing I would like to cover is overcoming adversity. We all do it. Nearly twenty years down the track the thing that has helped me most is to just keep turning up, focus on what you enjoy, set long term goals no matter how small and save for them. For every person who wants to discriminate against you because of your illness there are others who empathise and are ready to help. Having a job has always been of benefit to me and I've been lucky to find one and keep one for the last sixteen years.

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(From left): Glenn Jarvis zip lining in Tasmania, with his catch, with his boat and on the rocks.





Great to be busy

By Matthew Schipp

In August 2018, Matthew made a presentation about his recovery journey to The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) conference in Adelaide, along with Clare Evans, Manager of Capacity and Marketing for Flourish Australia. This is an edited text of his speech.

I would like to tell you about my history with mental health issues, but, most poignantly, my recovery experience with Flourish Australia. I am 39 and was struck down with mental health issues when I was 25. I spent a few years in and out of hospitals, then hostels in different areas of Sydney and the Southern Highlands.

Luckily for me, in 2015 I was put forward to Flourish Australia by another support service called HASI and I moved into a group home run by Flourish Australia. They were very helpful, buying me the furniture that I needed for my stay.

In 2016 I decided to do a Business Administration Diploma as I wanted to

ABOVE: Matthew working at the CSIRO. He completed with several applicants for the role. PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT SCHIPP

work in the area. I had done some Call Centre work before I became unwell and I knew it would be something I would enjoy. The Flourish Australia employees were very helpful and supportive over that period, talking to me about the course and involving themselves in the experience and making me feel confident that I could do it.

In 2017 I joined Flourish Australia's supported placement program and successfully landed three contract positions. The first working in Business Administration for a company called Dept Fix. Then I did a five month contract as an administration officer for the Department of Industry. Following this, I spent an interim three months working at Flourish Australia's scanning and digitization business.

Then, in February of 2018 I was put forward by Flourish Australia for a

supported placement in a reception role for the Commonwealth Scientific Industry Research Organisation, or CSIRO. I was interviewed for the position against a number of different applicants and got the job. It has been going great since then. I was recently presented with a TS Kudos award recognising my good performance in the workplace. It looks like they will be taking me on permanently.

I am very much enjoying my time at work it definitely helps in how you see things which I believe makes you feel better in yourself. Being able to communicate with other people on a regular basis clears up your head and you don't feel so trapped by your own world. It also feels great to be busy and that you are contributing to something that is not only your work but part of a team.

I now feel like I am moving forward in my life which I definitely have to thank Flourish Australia for. They have a system set up to help their clients no matter what their story may be. I have managed to move from a very difficult part of my life to a position where I wanted to be before I became unwell.

The recovery process has been very well supported I have kept busy over the time I have been with Flourish Australia even before I was employed. They offer a great deal of choice so there is always a lot of socializing. This leads fantastically into my employment as I already had that very important experience of having the courage to socialize with other people.

I am now in a position where I should be moving out of my group home and into my own premises sometime in September or October. I can remember dreaming of that fact five years ago and it feels great to finally reach this point. I can't stress enough the fact that if you have a goal for yourself no matter how long it may take and no matter how difficult it will be if you plan it out it is definitely possible, and there is definitely the help out their to make it happen.

The very idea that within just a few months I will be taking care of myself in the community makes me very happy. I would like to thank the people at Flourish Australia for what they have done.



supports I currently get.” **WRONG.** In fact you could possibly get even more support.

Five Fun facts

1. Did you know that Flourish Australia supported 29 people to transition over to the NDIS back in 2013. We are now supporting over 800!
2. Our peer work force has grown from about 20 to about 181 since the NDIS began.
3. Under the NDIS we have now registered in the ACT as well as Queensland and NSW and expanded our Hunter Region services to the Port Stephens area. We are also hoping to establish ourselves in other states.
4. Flourish Australia has and will continue to hold community forums across NSW and Queensland supporting people to better understand how a person with a mental health issue maybe eligible for the NDIS.
5. All staff across 64 + Sites have received NDIS training and are well positioned to support anyone who wants help with accessing the NDIS

What if I have been deemed ineligible by the NDIA?

If you are considered ineligible, speak with a provider like Flourish Australia who can support you to better understand why you were considered ineligible and can assist you with the next steps.

NDIS Q&A

By Mark Cliff (pictured above left) at the recent Hunter Disability Expo)

Before we start, remember that Flourish Australia can help you with everything you need! These lists are here to give you a ‘heads up.’ You don’t have to do it all by yourself. Call us! **1300 356 874** or email ndis@flourishaustralia.org.au

What are the top five things I need to know about (or find out about) to make a smooth transition to the NDIS?

1. I need to understand what a psychosocial disability is... by checking with the NDIS web site or giving Flourish Australia a call! And the same goes for the other four things:
2. I need to know what the functional impacts on my life are as a result of my mental health issues

3. I need to be prepared for my planning meeting...
4. I need to understand the role of the Local Area Coordination. We will have more about this role in the next issue of Panorama.
5. I need to know the eligibility criteria.

What are the Top 5 Myths around the NDIS?

1. “If I have NDIS funding I lose my pension” **NO! This is wrong.**
2. “NDIS doesn’t support people with mental health issues.” **This is wrong. The NDIS DOES support people with mental health issues.**
3. “If I don’t spend all of my money I lose it.” **Actually, you review your plans every year and your funding is based upon your needs at the time.**
4. “NDIS can be spent on anything.” **NO: your NDIS funding can only be used for supports which you require as a result of your disability.**
5. “If I go on the NDIS I can’t access the

Changes to the NDIS: Focus on episodic needs and on recovery based planning

By Warren Heggarty

The government has recognised the need for specialised approach to planning for people with disabilities that come from ‘severe and persistent’ mental health issues under the NDIS.

This follows a recommendation from Mental Health Australia in its National Disability Insurance Scheme Psychosocial Disability Stream Report. The intention is to provide better support for 64,000 people with psychosocial disabili-

ty as well as their families and carers.

The Minister for Families and Social Services, Paul Fletcher and Assistant Minister for Disability Services Sarah Henderson made the announcement on World Mental Health Day.

Assistant Minister Henderson thanked the many people including NDIS participants, families, carers, mental health professionals, advocates and agencies who informed the report’s recommendations.

The Psychosocial Disability Support Stream will be rolled out progressively. One of the things it includes will be to employ specialised planners and local area coordinators. Another is a ‘focus on recovery-based planning and episodic needs.’

This is a recognition that mental health recovery journeys do not take place in a straight line. It is common for people to

experience a ‘zigzagging’ in their level of wellness over time.

One of the big concerns of the mental health sector has been about people ‘falling through the cracks’ with the introduction of the NDIS.

As government funding was taken away from previous services like Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) it was feared that the people who accessed those services would not re-engage with them through the NDIS.

According to *Pro Bono* magazine, By July 2018, only 10 per cent, or 2,030 people, from PHaMs had transitioned to the NDIS.

Some estimates show that there are up to 690,000 people living with severe mental health issues Australia. Always remember that Flourish Australia can help you plan your NDIS package.



Above: 'I talk about how I have made services redundant in my life,' says Daniel.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DANIEL REYNOLDS

Opening the door to recovery through the NDIS

How peer support can work for you

By Daniel Reynolds Senior Peer Worker

It's been great to work for an organisation that champions lived experience and values each individual's recovery journey not only for the person accessing our services but also our staff. Before coming into this role I worked in construction where I didn't feel comfortable to bring my whole self to work. It wasn't until I had finished uni and applied for a job with Flourish Australia that I understood what a Peer Worker was and how my lived experience of mental health issues is valued. In my role as a Senior Peer Worker I am involved in a number of different tasks including community engagement and intake where I assist people wanting to access our service through their NDIS plan. A major part of this has been supporting people to transition to NDIS from block funded programs that were ceasing, for example the Personal Helpers and Mentors program.

Flourish Australia Newcastle has been working in the NDIS framework for many years as we were the trial site for the rollout of the scheme in 2013. I will admit it has had its challenges but it has also given opportunities for service providers to provide support to a larger number of people and of course to people who never would have been able to access services under the old system.

The NDIS is a new way of funding support. Instead of the funding going directly to service PROVIDERS, it goes to the person, and THEY get to decide which support services they want to purchase. This means they are in charge, and they choose the supports that will enable them to live the life they want.

So essentially it is moving choice and control to the people, giving them the power to decide who they want supporting them. It's also given people the opportunity to say to services that they aren't happy with what is being provided because they have the ability to shop

around to other providers to see who is providing a better service.

The Mind the Gap report that was released at the start of this year by the University of Sydney and Community Mental Health Australia noted some gaps when it came to people with a psychosocial disability applying for the NDIS. When I read through it, I related to four of these gaps in particular which I had come across very regularly in my everyday work. Mind the Gap can be found at <http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/documents/mind-the-gap.pdf>

In my role I have tried my best to fill these gaps around people's understanding of the scheme, supporting them through the process and giving people the opportunity to have someone they can consistently rely on to answer questions about the NDIS process at any time.

These were some of the recommendations from the report around how we can best support people to access the scheme. When looking at these it was already something we had been doing in our day to day practice at Flourish Australia in Newcastle but the report had highlighted a lot of gaps where we all could be doing better to support people through this transition.

“One of the toughest conversations I can have...is explaining the difference between a psychosocial disability and living with a mental health issue.”

One of the toughest conversations I can have with people who are enquiring about the NDIS is explaining the difference between a psychosocial disability and living with a mental health issue.

I think this is a great and empowering peer conversation for some (not all) around what support we need within our day to day lives and how our mental health can impact on how we function in our home and in the community. So I sit with people most days and talk briefly about my journey and how I have made services redundant in my life as I don't require any support other than that of

NDIS

the public health system such as my GP and psychologist.

So just to clarify, the NDIS will assess your needs based around your functional capacity not your mental health issues. I would not classify myself as having a psychosocial disability just because of my diagnosis. I feel a label has little to do with my ability to do things in the community but this is also because I have had a lot of support throughout my own recovery and I'm now at the point where I don't need that support.

It's also important to acknowledge though that many people may have had a very different journey to me. They may not have had the supports that I had when I first became unwell, supports which have led to my mental health issue having a different impact.

So the NDIS will assess you on these six domains: **mobility, communication, learning, self management, self care and social interaction.** This is where I see my lived experience as being valuable and going through these domains and explaining when I was unwell where I would have needed support. People relate to me in this situation on a very different level and I feel people are able to be more open when talking about their experiences with their mental health as some people do find the impacts challenging to speak about with someone they had only met five minutes ago.

For example the first one, mobility which majority of people including clinicians believe is more related to someone's physical ability. From my own journey I know that my major challenge was leaving my room due to feelings of fear and anxiety. When I'm using examples like this from my own journey it clicks in people and they seem to understand a bit more how it can impact on them in ways they never thought of.

So I sit with people and go through the six domains and we talk about different tasks such as shopping, cooking, work, education, community access and what that looks like for them day to day. We break them down into steps and work out where they would need support.

Take cooking for example- we speak about budgeting and if that's something they need support with. We speak about public transport and whether they are able to manage the timetable and

feel comfortable on the bus. We speak about healthy choices and managing a healthy diet and if that's something they need support with. There are so many elements to one task like shopping and so many things to take into account and **this is the evidence that the NDIS requires... not just that they need support with shopping but why and what is stopping them from doing this without support.** I've provided a story in the adjacent box as an example to illustrate what I mean.

The Challenge: Strengths versus deficits

One of what we call our 'three vital behaviours' at Flourish Australia is using 'strengths based language.' This is key to our role. But in regards to the NDIS this isn't very helpful when it comes to providing supporting documentation for the application. I remember getting a call from a person at the NDIS telling me that my support letter for someone who had accessed our services for the last 16 years was no good because it was strengths based! They needed deficit language which kind of goes against everything I had studied and everything I do in my day to day work.

For me to write down something on paper about a person saying that they can't do this task and can't do that task, went against everything I believed in. The most challenging part is to sit with people and talk about a bad day and then write it down saying they can't do these things because I knew they could with a little bit of support. Being honest and upfront with people made this process easier for me to accept and explaining to them this not about what they can't do its about getting support around these tasks to achieve these goals. I feel being really open and transparent with people and writing that support letter with them and wording it how they wanted made it a much better process.

So you can see through my experiences that having a peer worker engage in conversations around the NDIS application process can have positive outcomes.

Psychosocial disability: It's about 'function'

When I was working with a young person who lived with schizophrenia he assumed that he would just get the NDIS straight away because that's what someone had told him. I sat down with him and went through daily tasks like work (he had a part time job working in hospitality which he loved) we spoke about Education (he was completing his Diploma at TAFE) so looking just at these two activities I wasn't sure he was able to qualify..

But then I started to ask him about looking after his home and doing other tasks like cooking and shopping. At first he mentioned that he was OK with all this because he was a proud, strong young person. Unfortunately he wasn't able to do these tasks independently. After asking a few more questions I found out that he didn't have the skills to cook a meal at home and relied on microwave meals, he also paid someone to come do his lawns and clean his home and this was due to experiencing ill mental health at home and he would retreat to his room for long periods of time. So when I asked him if he would like support around this he was unsure.

Change was a big thing for him and this would have to be a slow transition. So he returned in a few days and we wrote out a support letter for him together to take with him to the clinicians that supported him to show them where he recognised he would need support so they could complete the access request forms to the best of their ability. He currently is using his NDIS plan and part of that is with Flourish Australia and every time he is in the office he always comes up and thanks for me all the support I gave him throughout the process and always thanked me for understanding.

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Over the pharmacy counter and into wellness

By Cheryl Tang

Cheryl Tang is a regular at the Young Adult's program at Flourish Australia's Buck House. Here she discusses what she gets out of these groups, and the role they have played in helping her attain the life she wants.

I initially connected with the Young Adult's program at Buckingham House in late July when my father forwarded an email about an open day BBQ they were hosting. After checking out what Buck House had to offer, it wasn't long before I was attending the Young Adult's program every Friday as a part of my weekly routine.

Having worthwhile activities in my routine is something I both need and enjoy. If I have something planned for my day, I find getting out of bed and running around very easy. However, if I have nothing planned for my day, I tend to have bad days where I spend a lot of time in bed doing nothing.

So far, the staff at the Young Adult's program have helped me to learn and

improve on many essential life skills, such as cooking. I thoroughly enjoy making things in the kitchen, and whenever I learn a new recipe I'll take it home and practise it. If the Young Adults program staff asked me what other skills I'd like them to teach me, it would have to be driving. My grandfather is too old to help me with this, and my father is, truthfully, probably not the best driving role model.

I've found knitting and crocheting to be repetitive tasks that help me feel relaxed and mindful.

Socially, this program has given me the opportunity to meet and interact with other people who have a personal understanding of mental health issues, and I've gotten along well with all of them. It helps to be reminded that I'm not the only one who is struggling with mental health issues.

Creating

I enjoy expressing myself creatively by playing the piano. I find composing

music is more relaxing than practicing a piece, because there are no "wrong" notes. When I want to impress people, I'll play Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" or "The Entertainer", but when I'm feeling reflective, I'll go with Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata". I also play the guitar and the ukulele and sing.

Another way I express myself is through art, and I recently put together an artwork that I'm planning on submitting to a competition: it has many colourful butterflies and black paper spirals stuck onto a sky blue canvas. I call it Spiralling High With Flying Colours. I was aiming to create a visual portrayal of bipolar mania (see illustration this page).

I also really like learning languages (I know English, Mandarin and Japanese), playing sports (badminton and soccer), and writing. I'm sure to do all of these things regularly. At one point, I also enjoyed cosplay (dressing up as characters). I also like penning short rhymes. One rhyme I wrote in hospital goes like this...

*Wake early, hear the birds,
They sing melodies without words.
See them gather, see them scatter,
Hear their voices, their musical chatter.*

Things that give me meaning

I am a devout Christian. This gives me purpose in life and provides hope when I have dark moments. I find reading the Bible calming. Many of my close friends are involved with Church, Bible study and other Christian organisations, so serving alongside them keeps me occupied with doing worthwhile things while also staying socially connected. These friends and my family make up the core of my social network, but I try not to rely on them too heavily because I feel like it stresses them out. The Sydney University Pharmacy Intern Training Program has also been very supportive.

Help from over the counter

I earned a Bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from Sydney University. I have always liked science, and I excelled in biology and chemistry in High School. My next career goal is to get registered as a pharmacist. This would involve putting in all of my assignments and studying for the exams. I also need to find a supportive workplace where I can log more hours as an intern. I have worked for about five

different pharmacies so far, including big name chains and independent pharmacies.

Recovery: what has and hasn't worked for me

Receiving a diagnosis didn't change my life much, but my recovery truly began on my first day in hospital. At this current point, I feel like I have fully recovered.

I would describe recovery as a state of physical, mental, spiritual wellbeing where you are content with your current situation. My approach to care and recovery has been a holistic one (a recovery made up of many parts) with my medication regime and support network at the core. With medication, I've found that it can mean the difference between recovery and relapse, but I also think that the wrong medication can cause even MORE issues, and pills alone won't do much to fix psychological problems or attitude problems.

I have helped brainstorm ideas for drama exercises, and provided snacks for the group.

However, I think most of all that my faith was the key to this holistic recovery, as it gives me hope.

Life hasn't always been easy, but thankfully I haven't had any other obstacles as major as my mental health issues. Negative thinking and low motivation were two of my biggest obstacles, but meditating on the Bible guards against unhelpful thinking. Now, when I am having a tough time, I privately pray to God about the things that are on my mind. I often do this while soaking in the bathtub with relaxing music playing in the background.

Mental health issues might slow you down, but this will only stop you from achieving your dreams if you let it. Even if you have recovered, you can and should continue to strive to make your life even better than it already is.

Buckingham House
43-45 Buckingham Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
1300 779 270

Cheryl Tang



I would describe recovery as a state of physical, mental, spiritual wellbeing where you are content with your current situation.

My strengths

Creative	Academic	Languages
Piano Composing Art Rhymes Knitting	Bachelor of Pharmacy , Sydney University. 'I have always liked science'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Mandarin Japanese

My goals

Professional Registration	Driving	Work
To become a registered pharmacist	"If the Young Adults program staff asked me what other skills I'd like them to teach me, it would have to be driving."	I have worked for about five different pharmacies so far

My challenges

Internship	Mental Health Issues
To find a supportive workplace where I can log more hours as an intern	'A recovery made up of many parts... Pills alone won't do much to fix psychological problems or attitude problems'

My supports

Worthwhile activities Faith, purpose, hope The young adults program at Buck House has helped me learn and improve on many essential life skills The Sydney Uni Intern Training Program	
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HOME COOKED SRI LANKAN CHIG PEA CURRY

Mental Health Month



Drop the mask and be yourself
A Warm Warana Welcome
By Jamie Levy PW

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Warana is a peer operated and led service in Queensland which joined the Flourish Australia family earlier in 2018. We would love to share a bit about our Open Day with Panorama readers.

First off, though, something about PEARL which describes what we do. It stands for **Peer Engaged Assisted Recovery Lifestyle**.

This acronym was cobbled together after someone was inspired by the creation of a pearl. If you aren't familiar with it, I will try to sum it up. An irritant or something foreign makes its way inside the oyster shell and as layers continue to develop around it a pearl is formed.

So the metaphor is, that something which might upset our balance or be viewed as a negative can in fact be the beginning of a beautiful transformation. Then of course those layers could be

ABOVE, FROM LEFT: Music makers Ryan, Zac, Russell, Mark, Michael and Kevin. BOTTOM LEFT: Sandra, Ged, Matt and Stephen. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Artwork 'What recovery means to me.' PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JAMIE LEVY

viewed as our resilience. Or something like that!

It was a fantastic Open Day with a great turnout. Although the weather was terrible we still went ahead with the BBQ. Thankfully, we have a wonderful covered outdoor area which quickly filled up once the lunch was ready. Peers got involved with the cooking and serving and ensured everyone was well fed and enjoying a cold drink.

The atmosphere was so warm and it was a real celebration of community and connection. Many new faces popped in for a look around and a chat, some staying on for the music which added to the 'party vibe!' With the music playing in the background peers took

the opportunity to add some words of hope and resilience to the canvas (below right), the message of which was 'What Does Recovery Mean to Me?'

Through doing so we were all engaged in moments of reflection and acknowledgement of our individual journeys. This will now hang proudly in our foyer and will no doubt be a source of daily inspiration to us all.

Many conversations flowed throughout the day but one in particular stood out to me. A peer shared that they had never been surrounded by so many people that accepted them just as they are, that they could drop the "mask" and be themselves. We all agreed that we shouldn't leave it for a whole year to pass before doing it again.



10 years of the Women and Children's Program



ABOVE Lachlan, Ethan and Taylah at the Women and Children's program 10th birthday. Behind them is a mural made of panels expressing the feelings of the people who access this service. PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

My Journey

By Taylah Griffiths addressing the 10th birthday celebration of the W&CP

Hello everyone, my name is Taylah and this is my beautiful little family. Ethan my son who is one and a half and my partner Lachlan. Like most of you here today, I'm sure that I can say we all have been through some hard times in life where you feel like you don't really know what to do and don't really know where or who to ask for help.

I was in that situation once and it was very hard for me as my son was just born and I found myself having to leave our family home. Due to my partner struggling with his mental health issues at the time, I was told that it wasn't safe to live there anymore.

I didn't have anywhere to go and I was at that time a single parent raising a beautiful little newborn who I love very much. An opportunity came along from Flourish Australia and I was soon accept-

ed into their program with open arms. I was given a safe environment for me and my son and I was very grateful. Being in the program not only gave me the space and time to grow healthily with my son but also gave me many opportunities to attend exciting new groups and achieve many great new skills to be better and improved for me and my family.

Being in the program I learnt a lot about what matters in life. It taught me that having a child tests you in every way. They bring so much love and joy into your life and you need to cherish each and every second you have with them. It taught me from my time there that it's important to look at the people around you. Whether it be your child, your partner, your mother or your friend. To cherish the moments you have with them in this very second.

Flourish Australia taught me to pay attention to the little things you love in your life and hold onto each moment. It taught me that every step you take will shape you into who you should be so not

to let those moments slip by without a second thought and to really stop and smell the roses.

Flourish was the first step to our new beginning. Not only did I accomplish new groups like First Aid and other certificates, I had a chance to re-connect myself and Ethan with Lachlan in a safe environment which supported us as a family. That helped us so much.

Seven months later, Ethan and I are now happily living in our new house in the transition program. We have regular visits from Lachlan and my support worker from Flourish Australia. We are growing so healthy and happy, stronger as a family every day.

Thanks to Flourish Australia, we can say that we will be able to live together as a family unit once our program with Flourish has finished which makes us very happy. My family and I will be forever thankful for the time we have spent with Flourish Australia. It was truly a blessing. Happy 10th Anniversary!

10 years of the Women and Children's Program

achieved their goals. This can require many different kinds of assistance, which is why we employ people from a range of disciplines, such as Mental Health Workers, Peer Workers, and Parenting Support Workers.

Transition

While all paths through this program are unique, all of the families who are provided with assistance will be working at eventually returning to the community full-time. So while some of the mums who access this service may start off living with their children on-site in a two-bedroom home, the longer-term goal is always to transition back to the community.

The mums and the staff members also put a high priority on keeping the young ones happy and settled which is why there's lots of cool play equipment in the toy room, as well as other children they can play with.

Petting Zoo

Starting at midday and wrapping up around 2:30pm, the 10th anniversary celebrations included all kinds of family-friendly entertainment such as arts and crafts, face painting and a petting zoo complete with baby goats, rabbits, baby chickens, guinea pigs, ducks and a "sizzle" hen (so named because it was a hybrid of a silky chicken and a frizzle chicken, not because of the noise it would make in a deep fryer).

The kids (and kids at heart) were all sure to give the baby goats a scratch behind the ear at least once. An unexpected highlight was an impressive drum concert performed by a large group of high school students from Blacktown Girls flawlessly hammering out songs in perfect synchronisation, guided by their music teacher.

Edible Lego

The food and drinks were absolutely exceptional, with an incredible spread of cakes, muffins, fruit platters, sandwiches and BBQ goodies pulling out all the stops. The big "10" cake was even decorated with edible Lego! There was also a whole room of old posters, newspaper articles and photographs charting the history of the Women's & Children's Program.



Little animals flocked to Charmian Clift House near Blacktown to join the little humans like Charleigh and mothers like Stacey for the celebrations. PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

The Women and Children's Program celebrates ten years of changing lives for the better

By Grant J Everett

On the 8th of November, Flourish Australia's Women & Children's Program at Blacktown held a party to commemorate a decade of changing the lives of vulnerable and at-risk mothers for the better. And while Flourish Australia runs many services focused on mental health recovery, the Women's & Children's Program we provide at Blacktown is one of a kind.

The Women & Children's Program is for mothers with one or more children

who don't have anywhere safe or stable to live. These mums have often gone through hardships such as homelessness, poverty, mental health issues or domestic violence. No matter why they link up with us, we offer all of them the same thing: a safe, supported place of respite where they can plan how to get their lives back on track. During their time with this service, our friendly staff will help these mums to figure out what resources and assistance they need to start again, and will work with them every step of the way until they've

10 years of the Women and Children's Program

Following the Welcome to Country by Aunty Margaret, Taylah eloquently shared her tale of the hard road she's walked over the last couple of years, and how the Women & Children's Program has helped her overcome her struggles and turned her life around (be sure to read Taylah's story on page 17 in this issue of Panorama – Ed).

A good crowd from all walks of life attended the festivities. There were families we are currently supporting as well as those we have successfully helped in the past, local staff members, a few representatives from Head Office, photographers and reporters, our Chair, Professor Elizabeth More AM, a couple of our former and current CEOs (Pamela Rutledge and Mark Orr, respectively), and several members of the general public who wanted to celebrate the milestone of this important service.

Councillor Kathie Collins OAM attended on behalf of Blacktown City Council, and as she has always had a focus on improving the health and wellbeing of the Blacktown City community and eliminating domestic violence and homeless-

ness, it goes without saying that services like this one are very close to her heart.

Reshaping

Our former CEO Pam Rutledge (Pictured right spoke to Panorama about her memories of the earliest days of the Women & Children's Program. Pam had only been CEO for a short time when the then Richmond Fellowship took control of Charmian Clift Cottages and reshaped it into our Women's & Children's Program. So she was able to see it grow in leaps and bounds during most of her time as CEO. Ten years on, Pam is pleased as punch to see how far this service has come!

Unlike most of Flourish Australia's services, the Women & Children's Program is not funded by the NDIS. The program is funded by NSW Health and the Department of Family and Community Services through the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program. Even though we

are not reliant on NDIS we have started working with a family who have NDIS funding.

Thanks to Suzanne Hudson for assistance with this story.



ABOVE former CEO Pam Rutledge. PHOTO BY GRANT J EVERETT **BELOW CLOCKWISE** The drummers from Blacktown GHS, Chair of Flourish Australia Prof Elizabeth Moore with former WCC manager now Nepean Senior Cluster Director Belinda Jenkins, CEO Mark Orr with a baa lamb, special goodies. PHOTOS BY NEIL FENELON



10



The Invictus Games are open to competitors from all branches of the regular or reserve Armed Forces of participating nations who have become wounded, injured or ill during or as a direct consequence of their service. Deonny had the opportunity to work for the 2018 games in Sydney.

Working at the INVICTUS Games

ABOVE: Deonny in the kitchen at Figtree Conference Centre PHOTO BY NEIL FENELON

By Deonny Zaroual

I had the chance to work as a staff member of the Invictus Games in Sydney during October 2018. Later in this issue, I will tell you how I got the job and what sort of work I had to do. To begin with, though, I would like to discuss the experience of working for these wounded, injured or ill servicemen and women from all over the

world.

There was a lot of security and secrecy, and there were no photos allowed and nobody actually spoke about it, but we always knew when Prince Harry was around or close by because of his body guards.

On the other hand Prince Frederick of Denmark came up to the buffet. I think he had the curry chicken. He heard us giggling when we recognised him and cracked a massive smile.

When assisting deaf people at the buffet, I learned that it is better for one hospitality assistant to stick with the same diner the whole time, so they are with a familiar person. People in wheelchairs, often get overlooked or even ignored. When working with people who have disabilities, you need to be mindful that you are not ignoring people. You need to look at everyone, including children, to show that they are not invisible to you!

Of course, we saw a lot of people who had physical injuries such as scars, or having no arms or legs. You want to show people that they are not invisible, but you don't want to look like you're just staring at people either. You need to be balanced.

Invisible injuries

As well as physical disabilities and injuries, a lot of people had *invisible* injuries, such as anxiety and depression that were brought on by warfare. There were soldiers who had tried to take their own lives, but thankfully had not succeeded. There were people who had developed alcohol and drug problems. Some had been injured by 'friendly fire.' One man had developed amnesia and could not remember anything before the war, not even his wife. They had a second marriage on the second last day of the games.

Some people were representing family members who could not actually participate. There was a lady who was participating on behalf of both her son and her husband, both of whom became 'brain dead' due to their injuries.

Another story that made me cry was about a little boy who had been killed along with his whole family by troops from his own side because he had befriended a soldier from the other side.

A lot of people did not speak English. There were interpreters, plus we gave them some lessons as well! Although they all seemed to enjoy Australia, there was not really enough time to go sight seeing. Some visited Bondi and the Blue Mountains. Everyone said 'we'll be back', though.

It is very expensive for each person to participate. For example there is the athlete, the carer or wife or husband, the luggage, the equipment like wheelchairs, the team doctor or any other supporting people like psychologists and so forth. And of course everyone gets homesick.

Some athletes came from poor countries where they do not have access to prostheses. They had to learn how to use prostheses specially for the games. We heard a lot of the stories that the participants told, including some stories about the particular wars they were in. You could sense that there were still a lot of tensions.

“The Duke...saw the positive impact sport could have on the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women.”

It was our job to help the athletes relax and enjoy themselves when they weren't participating in events.

The Canadians- we spoke to so many Canadians- they loved their pancakes with maple syrup, but the Americans preferred Jelly donuts. The French were all smiles, but I'm not sure the Italians liked the way Australians do pasta, though! Some participants had separate food because of religious requirements.

The idea was to participate. One runner from Canada won everyone's heart and had the crowds on his side even though I think he tended to come last in all his events. He would say to people 'Hey, I've just had a shower, so can I have a hug?'

More in Employment Panorama page 22

About the Invictus Games

The Invictus Games are open to competitors from all branches of the regular or reserve Armed Forces of participating nations who have become wounded, injured or ill during or as a direct consequence of their service.

“Most of us will never know the horrors of combat. Horrors so great that many servicemen and women suffer life-changing injuries, both visible and invisible, while serving their countries, while serving us. How do these men and women find the motivation to move on and not be defined by their injuries? How can we challenge perceptions and send a positive message about life beyond disability to an international audience? HRH The Duke of Sussex (Prince Harry) not only asked but answered these questions.” (Invictus Games, 2018)

The Invictus Games were inspired by the Warrior Games held in the United States of America in 2013. The Duke of Sussex saw the positive impact sport could have on the recovery and rehabilitation of wounded, injured and ill servicemen and women and decided to launch a similar event in London.

The first Invictus Games, in London, had 400 competitors from 13 Nations. The second games were in Orlando, Florida in 2016, followed by Toronto, Canada in 2017. 2018 was Sydney's turn to host 500 competitors and 1000 supporters from 18 nations competing in 11 medal sports, plus participating in golf and wheel chair tennis. Some of the team badges Deonny collected are illustrated below. The 18 Nations represented in Sydney were:

- Afghanistan
- Australia
- Canada
- Denmark
- Estonia
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Iraq
- Italy
- Jordan
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Poland
- Romania
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- United States of America



You can read the full details at the Invictus Games website <https://www.invictusgames2018.org/the-games/nations/>



Monique's biggest speech yet!

By Monique Diplock

Flourish Australia flew Monique Diplock down to Adelaide to do a talk as one of our representatives for this year's TheMHS Conference. Here she shares her experiences with Panorama Readers.

I was studying Mental Health at TAFE a while ago when I first heard about the TheMHS Conference, Australia and New Zealand's biggest mental health convention. Little did I know that just a few years later I'd be on a stage, speaking in front of a huge crowd at that very event.

I was surprised when Fay Jackson (General Manager Inclusion) asked me to present a talk at the upcoming TheMHS Conference in Adelaide as a representative of Flourish Australia. The organisation would fly me down, and even help me go over what I wanted to say.

While I've done a couple of talks in front of my TAFE class, served on the Community Advisory Council and did a Recognition of Lived Experience at Taree TAFE's Day of Action Against Sexual Assault in 2017, TheMHS would be, by far, my biggest presentation to date. Being asked to speak on behalf of an organisation I really believe in was amazing, and it was comforting that the staff had such a strong belief in my talents.

ABOVE: A view of central Adelaide during 2018 TheMHS. PHOTO BY KIM JONES

I have to admit I had my doubts, though. Like always, anxiety was my biggest obstacle. My philosophy with managing anxiety is simple: unless you're skydiving or dancing with a Leopard, the thing you're anxious about is probably not "that" scary or dangerous. It's the build-up that's the real problem, the scary scenarios my head invents. When I'm at high levels of anxiety, I just try to mentally take one step in front of the other.

TheMHS is short for The Mental Health Services Conference.

If the feelings get so high that they affect my ability to do that, I take a moment, listen to music, or write until I'm centred. It really helped that my entire family encouraged me to go for this opportunity, and I knew deep down that I would regret it if I didn't take hold of it. So I said yes.

The support I got from Flourish Australia was great! For instance, I experienced a moment of fright leading up to the big day: when I sat down to finish writing out my talk just before I was due to fly

out for the conference, I went totally blank. I emailed Kim Jones (Project Officer Inclusion) in a panic, and she helped me figure out the main points that I could work on based on my notes.

Fay was also amazing at easing my mind when I was concerned my story was babbling and oversharing. Peter Farrugia (Peer Workforce Program Manager) was full of knowledge both before and after the talk. Everyone was extremely helpful in sharing their tips and tricks.

On the day of my presentation, I was reassured to see the familiar faces of the Flourish Australia crew while I walked up to the stage. My presentation at TheMHS was called "Why Good Services Should Aim To Make Themselves Redundant". I shared some handy tools and ideas, as well as my own story.

Originally, Fay Jackson and I were going to do 10 minutes each, but to my surprise Fay decided it was important for my story to be told in full. I felt at ease sharing my story in this safe space, and the fact I had really good support teams both with me and back at home made all the difference. I was thankful my anxiety didn't overcome me at TheMHS as much as usual.

The highlight of my trip to Adelaide was my entire trip. I loved it! I especially enjoyed connecting with people at TheMHS and getting to know the Flourish crew more. I feel like I made friends, which I rarely do. In addition to my own presentation, I was also able to attend the entire TheMHS Conference. The learning opportunities were endless, and I came home with new ideas and angles for projects that I've wanted to get up and running for ages.

It's usually easy for me to find negatives with everything I do, but in the end I was surprised and impressed with how well I did. Three or four non-Flourish attendees came up afterward to tell me I was brave and that they each had something to take home with them from my talk. Before this experience, I would probably have said a very stern NO to doing more presentations. But after Adelaide, I'm definitely open to more public speaking.

Want to hear Monique's talk from the TheMHS 2018 Conference?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOKqvsCG0og>



By Warren Heggarty

There is a surprising amount of disagreement about anger, aggression and violence and how they interrelate. Ultimately the solution is to stop, think and consider the consequences for yourself and others. However, understanding more about these three terms might help us understand ourselves and our behaviour a bit better.

We often use the terms anger, aggression and violence interchangeably. (Tarabay & Warburton, 2017) Indeed, some people refer to verbal aggression (causing insult and offence) as a form of violence on a par with physical aggression, like punching. Others equate anger with aggression despite the fact that aggressive behaviour does not necessarily require anger to fuel it.

Anger is a feeling, aggression is a behaviour (Morin, 2011). What's more, anger is an acceptable behaviour because it can energise and motivate us towards actions which are good. Anger can be channelled constructively as well as destructively. There is a choice.

Our hormones make anger a little

complicated. Because anger releases endorphins which mask sadness and hurt, anger can actually make us feel better, even if the people around us might not agree! In what way is anger a precursor to aggression and violence which are behaviours rather than emotions? (Morin, 2011)

Tarabay and Warburton tell us that the Columbine School murderer Eric Harris had a mindset that clearly approved of violence as a response to the world. Although Harris had previously had anger management (and had noted its effectiveness) it was clear that being able to control his anger did not change his views on aggression and violence. (Tarabay & Warburton, 2017)

Just as anger and aggression are not the same thing, the same could be said of violence and aggression. Aggressive behaviour might sometimes involve a desire to harm the victim, but equally it might be about bringing benefit to the perpetrator. Anger, then, need not be present in aggressive behaviour and aggressive behaviour need not involve physical violence. Examples of non-physical aggression might be insulting, offending, screaming at people, gossiping, sabotaging relationships and so forth.

Some behaviour that appears angry is merely aggression. A person screams and throws things not because they feel hard done by, but because they cynically know it will get them what they want. Likewise the presence of anger, even severe anger, does not need to lead to violence. If a person is wise enough to channel their anger towards solving problems, anger might even achieve the opposite of violence!

An example might be the civil rights campaign of Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Dr King was able to tap into the anger of African American people at a time when they were not equal in the sight of the law in the United States. However, he was able to channel that anger towards non-violent legislative and attitudinal change.

Not everyone would agree that anger, aggression and violence are three separate if inter-related things. Some people see them as a continuum, meaning that anger can lead to aggression can lead to violence.

Behaviour Data Systems, a company which develops and sells psychological tests takes this approach with its Anger-Aggression-Violence Assessment instrument: '...triad theory postulates shades... of anger-aggression and violence exist as points on a continuum of emotional reactivity. This triad theory is based on the theorem that "as anger increases, it can evolve into aggression, which in turn can intensify and evolve into violence."' They admit that this is an obvious oversimplification but nevertheless argue that it is useful for both psychological practice and criminal justice situations.

How would one explain cases like Columbine where cold calculation seems much a precursor of violence as anger? Those who espouse the triad or continuum view might claim that anger can evolve from hostility or cynicism. (Anger Aggression Violence.com, 2005) Be that as it may, according to Tarabay and Warburton, enacted aggression does not reduce one's aggressive impulses. While anger can be channelled constructively, the same cannot be said of aggression and violence.

The key is to replace impulsive actions that derive straight from emotions with thinking things through and considering the consequences of proposed actions.

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and Gambling!



Gambling and Drinking: What could possibly go wrong?

A hotel in a suburb of Sydney which shall remain nameless. Outside, signs advertising TAB, Keno and the Dragons (sic) Den VIP Lounge. There's an ATM at the entrance in case you didn't bring any cash...

The Dragon is the most auspicious animal of the Chinese Horoscope. The signs are written in both Chinese and Korean. The entrance is guarded by two fake Qin Dynasty terracotta warriors... This is a suburb with high populations of Chinese, Korean, Japanese and other Asian people.

Of course, if you were naïve you would expect the VIP Lounge to contain couches on which Very Important Persons lounge around sipping sherries (or maybe sake), discussing the stock

market. But there are no couches, just stools, and they all face gaming machines.

This is not the stock market, it's the other type of gambling, the kind that you can't win. Gaming machines are programmed so that the house must win handsomely. The more you play, the less likely you are to come out ahead.

Some people enjoy gambling. There is probably no harm in setting a budget for gambling and then going ahead and blowing it, if that's what you like to do with your money. But as with any potentially addictive practice, like drinking alcohol, quite a lot of people lose control.

When you combine the two, alcohol and gambling, the result can be tragic.

At the moment, anyone who watches free to air TV could be forgiven for thinking that our economy relies almost exclusively on gambling. However, in order to get the wealth needed to gamble, we first need to produce things to sell, whether they be fake terracotta warrior statues or NDIS services. We

must sell enough of these products to have a little left over to blow on gambling AFTER we have paid the rent, fed the baby, paid our tax etc.

If you have difficulty controlling impulses, such as the impulse to gamble, drinking alcohol will remove any trace of self control you might have had.

At the risk of stating the obvious, if gambling is causing you problems, then you have a gambling problem. Alcohol will magnify the problem, unless you drink somewhere that you have no access to any form of gambling, including on-line. Like on the moon.

Some people get into big financial trouble through gambling, in which case they are left with a range of ongoing crises like debt, relationship breakdowns, poverty, homelessness and keeping the wrong company. Professional help is available, however.

This site contains some reasonable advice concerning gambling:
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/addictions/gambling-addiction-and-problem-gambling.htm>

One prominent point is to restrict your opportunities to gamble, which could mean steering clear of places like the Dragon's Den or the adjoining bars.

Gambling is often a way to try to deal with the problems of life, but it ends up increasing them. The solution is to work out what the problems are (boredom, loneliness, stress or, ironically, lack of money are some) and then to substitute positive activities for gambling.

Such substitute activities need to be meaningful and give you a sense of achievement in the long term, rather than a short term kick. It is best to have a positive approach that taps into your strengths because it is virtually impossible to AVOID gambling stimuli in Australia!

Often people can benefit from the fellowship of others who don't gamble or who are themselves in recovery from gambling and or drinking.



What Echo the Empath needs to do for herself

by Warren Heggarty

“The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.”

—Thomas Merton (Rankin 2017)

Someone hooked into a codependent pattern may feel so unlovable that she literally can't believe that anyone would love her if she's not giving too much and neglecting her own needs. (Rankin, 2017) Her archetype in Greek mythology is Echo from the legend of Narcissus.

According to Traci Stein, 'Tireless Caregivers' as she calls the empathic Echo personality, are people who are compassionate, good listeners, drawn to caring for others, and who place a high value on relationships. The problem ... is not that they are caring, but that they feel compelled to take care of everyone and everything, ultimately to their own detriment. (Stein, 2018)

These empaths place a high value both on relationships and on seeing the good in others. They invest heavily in people, even selfish people who don't deserve it. Empaths assume that others must share a similar code of conduct to their own. They have trouble even imagining the inner workings of a truly self-absorbed person who is basically exploiting them.

Empaths fear saying "no" to people. They think that saying 'no' makes them selfish or bad. Being nice to people and taking care of them is so central to their identity and self worth that they inadvertently make themselves prey to selfish people. (Stein, 2018)

Above: "Echo and Narcissus" painting by John William Waterhouse

Very selfish people, narcissists if you like can SENSE when a person is an 'Echo' personality and are drawn to them because they can exploit them. Narcissists can feed off caring people's good nature and use the carer's sense of guilt to get what they want.

This is great for the selfish person, who gets a guilt ridden slave, but disastrous for the caregiver who invests their own self esteem in someone who really doesn't appreciate them for who they are.

A match between a Narcissus and an Echo is "a match made in hell." In the beginning of a relationship, the narcissist can "love bomb" the empath to hook them into this pattern. "However, it's not real love... The love bombing is not real, intimate, meaningful, unconditional love. It's a form of deception." (Rankin, 2017)

Lissa Rankin MD says people in the Narcissus role often seem to be sexy, charismatic, talented, attractive, funny, smart, seductive and the life of the party.

The people in the role of Echo. tend to be more empathic, submissive, deferential, sensitive, self-effacing, service-oriented, externally referenced, over giving, and emotionally manipulative.

Echo 'boosts Narcissus's already hearty ego by repeating back what Narcissus wants to hear while compromising her own needs and desires until she be-

comes resentful and feels victimized. If she stops echoing back what Narcissus wants to hear, she's likely to get ousted.'

Narcissus and Echo do not have a proper partnership. In a partnership, both partners are in charge of their own lives. But here, the exploiter (Narcissus) is in charge of both. Echo's life is spent reacting to the egotist. She or he has no power of her own to change things for better or worse. Everything is up to Narcissus.

The question is, how do you escape the role of Echo whose 'blind compassion' is really "conflict avoidance in holy drag" as Robert Augustus Masters calls it.

Echo needs deal with boundary related issues such as the following (and many more besides which you can find in Rankin's article):

- Recognising that we ALL need help from others (especially if we are carers!)
- Setting and enforcing boundaries
- Learning how to relate to people who don't rely on us for something.
- Prioritising their own life's needs
- Expressing what they believe
- Acknowledging that others can take care of themselves.
- See themselves as 'good enough'
- Graciously receiving gifts, genuine praise or help
- Stop feeding on feelings of self-righteousness.
- Work towards achieve their own goals, pursue dreams, and complete projects
- Stop priding themselves on faulty loyalties to abusive people.
- Learning to engage in true intimacy (Rankin, 2017)

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Anorgasmia

By Warren Heggarty

If you have sex problems due to medication and/or mental health issues, join the club. A club that is expanding every day, membership of which is open to everybody! So many people are afflicted with so many problems that Panorama cannot hope even to scratch the duco on the jalopy of sexual dysfunction. In this issue we will look at something which is quite common, but which you have probably never heard of. Anorgasmia.

“The meds have pretty much killed my sex life. Not only does the depression make me disinterested in sex, it’s almost impossible for me to orgasm. This affects my self-esteem because I feel I’m letting my partner down.” — Niki M. (Schuster, 2018)

Anorgasmia is a frequently reported side effect of some antidepressants among other medications. It means the delay or absence of orgasm, even after prolonged exertions. This absence of climax happens regularly to the point where people become frustrated, disappointed and distressed by it. It affects both women and men.

It is not unknown for certain antidepressants to be prescribed to help people

who experience orgasm prematurely to slow things down a bit. But a beneficial delay to one person is frustration to another. Of course, some people are not bothered by not experiencing orgasm. Doctors don’t generally ask you about this common problem. Because sex is a private thing for most people, people don’t ask their doctor about it either. Especially not if they are depressed, have low self esteem and feel like they’re letting people down. This is a vicious circle which needs to be broken and talking about it might just be the first step.

According to urologist and medical correspondent Dr David Samadi, apart from some medications, there are many other causes of anorgasmia. If you have mental health issues, you probably have several of these issues running simultaneously. So no wonder you’re having difficulties! Here are some:

Stress, relationship problems, conflict, past sexual trauma or abuse, negative attitudes about sex, guilt about sex, boredom, monotony...

Come to think of it, you don’t need to have a mental health issue to experience any or all of those things. Here are some more...

Medications: ‘A side-effect of some antidepressant medications such as se-

lective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs, can include anorgasmia, especially among men;’ diabetes; old age; drug or alcohol use –‘it is not unusual for a man to experience anorgasmia from the sedative effects of some drugs;’ chronic pain; hypertension and a number of other things best left to your medical practitioner to eliminate. (Samadi, 2017)

What to do

Sexual dysfunction, therefore, is often the result of a combination of causes. It may be that taking SSRIs has tipped you over the edge, but there are other factors you can work on without ceasing a medication that benefits you (which should never be done suddenly or without prior discussion with your prescribing doctor).

Some of the contributing factors of anorgasmia are not rocket science. Boredom, monotony, alcohol, drugs, conflict, these are all problems that suggest their own solution. Make it interesting, try something different, don’t have sex drunk or drugged, discuss things with your partner.

Orgasms naturally vary in intensity, and ‘women vary in the frequency of their orgasms and the amount of stimulation needed to trigger an orgasm. Most women require some degree of direct or indirect clitoral stimulation and don’t climax from penetration alone.’ (Mayo Clinic, 2018)

A qualified sex counsellor or therapist could be consulted to help explore possibilities like, emotional problems, past trauma and abuse, cultural factors, conflict with your partner, low sex drive or poor arousal.

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How your mobile phone can help you to keep your friends closer

By Grant J Everett

Do you have a clear divide between deep and meaningful relationships with true friends, and more shallow interactions with acquaintances? Maintaining friendships with too many people can take up a lot of your time and effort, and may require energy that you simply don't have to spare. So if you feel that you value quality over quantity and a small circle of friends is all you need, then you're far from alone. Regardless of numbers, we need to actively nurture our relationships on a regular basis if we want to keep them.

This golden age of technology has seen the mobile phone become a major component of how we keep our friends close. And unless you own the clunkiest of late-90s bricks, your mobile should have these useful buddy-retaining features:

- Sending texts and emails
- Accessing social media anywhere,

anytime

- A calendar function to keep track of your social plans
- A contacts list that you can use to conveniently store all your friend's details
- A camera to preserve fun memories
- And of course, making phone calls!

How can I use my mobile phone to help my social life?

Record your plans on your phone's calendar, including when, where, who and what. Also, by noting when you've spent time with a friend, you can see whether you're overdue to give them a call.

Photos are a great reminder of fun times and offer an opportunity to relive those moments. Take snaps!

If you can't meet up at the agreed-upon time, call to let your friend know in advance. Being ditched with no notice for no reason will greatly annoy anybody, and as we all carry phones nowadays, there's really no excuse.

If you get invited to something that will be regularly celebrated every year, like a wedding or a birthday, record the date for future reference. Your friends will be touched you remembered their special day!

If you hang out with somebody, text them afterwards to say what a great time you had, and that you should do it again sometime soon. Simple, but effective.

Other friendship tips

Use catch-ups to introduce your like-minded friends, tightening your social network.

We all have different priorities. Something that's important to you may not

mean anything at all to somebody else. You don't need to be exact duplicates of each other to be close friends.

Don't get upset if someone doesn't seem as keen to hang out as you are. On the same note, you don't have to accept every invitation to spend time together.

Try not to get annoyed if somebody doesn't respond to you quickly enough. We lead busy lives, and sometimes emails and texts slip through the net.

Low-pressure, cheap ways to hang out - like going for coffee or a kebab - are great, but if you offer to go to an event that your friend is really into, like a concert or a stage show, this can be a great way to build on your existing friendship.

When chatting or messaging, be real about where you're at. Don't just say you're fine! Share what's on your mind, what you're excited about, and what you're looking forward to. This will encourage the other person to open up in return.

Focus on the needs of others. Find out what's happening in their lives, and see if there's anything you can do for them. Just being there for the harder times is invaluable, and will forge a more powerful bond.

Been meaning to talk to a friend for ages, but your good intentions never result in a phone call? A call, text, or email is all it takes, so why keep putting it off?

Set aside ten minutes each day to call, text, or send emails to a couple of friends. Ideally, they will respond in kind. Hearing from a friend can improve anyone's day, so pick up that phone!

Finally, a little consideration can have huge results.

“The key is if you strive to provide real value in your outreach, people will look forward to hearing from you, every time. Soon enough, they'll be reaching out to you as well and it won't feel like a one-way street.”

-Jenny Powers, Founder of Running With Heels

Recovery Conversations

Getting myself around

December 2018 - 2



How to get to where you're going as quickly and easily as possible

Grant J Everett

You probably know how to get around your regular areas off-by-heart, but what do you do when you need to go somewhere out of the ordinary? You might have a job interview, be visiting a friend's house for the first time, heading to a holiday location six hours up the coast, or you could just be using public transport on a day when the timetables are different (a Sunday or a public holiday, for instance).

No matter where you want to go within New South Wales, the Trip Planner website is a free, easy-to-use toolkit that can get you there as soon as possible. It's available on any internet-capable

ABOVE: Keep a photo of your local bus time table! PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY

device, and is just as useful whether you are travelling on foot, driving, catching a bus, train, ferry, coach or a light rail service, or even a combination. Trip Planner will identify what services you need to catch for the different legs of your trip, and also chart your path as a line on a map. You will be able to see what bus stops and train stations you will be passing along the way, as well as how much walking will be involved between them.

To use Trip Planner, just type "trip planner" into Google's search bar, and it should be the first thing to pop up. Trip Planner's exact address is

transportnsw.info/trip

When plotting your journey, Trip Planner has three different timing options: leaving right now, leaving at a specific time, or choosing when you want to

arrive at your destination. It also allows you to compare earlier and later services with the touch of a button in case one of them suits you better. This allows you to plan trips weeks or months in advance, and adjusting your journey details is as simple as a few taps. In addition to calculating your most efficient route down to the minute, you'll also know how much your journey will cost, ensuring that you won't get caught short with your Opal card balance.

As well as providing every map and timetable for every mode of travel in NSW, Trip Planner is also dynamic: this means it's kept up-to-date at all times, so if your train is running late, Trip Planner will know. It will also automatically account for your trip falling on a public holiday, weekend, or other factors that will affect your journey time, like scheduled trackwork, train station upgrades, road closures, special events that block road access, accidents, anything like that. And as wheelchair access still hasn't become universal at train stations yet, Trip Planner can warn you about this, too.

But what if you get lost, and need more guidance? This problem is as easy to solve as asking Google a question. Searching "how do I get to Sydney Olympic Park Station?", for instance, will show you a map with the fastest path between your current location and your goal, as well as your transport options. If you want even more help, just hit the START button (it's a little blue arrow) to be audibly guided every step of the way by a pleasant voice.

Please note that Trip Planner is for journeys within New South Wales. If you are in Queensland, use Journey Planner. In Adelaide, you want Adelaide Metro Journey Planner. In the ACT, use Transport Canberra. And in Victoria, use the PTV Journey Planner.

Travel Tip: For bus stops that you use often, consider taking a photo of the timetable with your phone's camera. Remember to photograph the Saturday and Sunday timetable, too.



Where mental wellbeing thrives

Seven Quick Questions About Panorama

If you regularly attend a Flourish Australia Service, please name it in the box at right:
Eg, Moree, Harris Park, Buck House...

We would like to ask you a few questions so that we can improve the quality of Panorama

Q. 1 Firstly, how often would you say you read Panorama? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY, AS APPROPRIATE

- Always
- Most of the time
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never If you ticked 'Never', PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO QUESTION 4

Q.2 When you are reading Panorama, do you usually... PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY, AS APPROPRIATE.

- ... read all of it, cover to cover
- read most of it
- read some of it
- Just skip through it/ look at the pictures etc.

What do you like about Panorama?

Q.3 In terms of the topics covered in Panorama, which of the following do you enjoy reading about? PLEASE TICK AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> People's recovery stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Linguistic Diversity/Multicultural issues. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical health, sport, fitness, nutrition | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking, food | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT*IQA issues | <input type="checkbox"/> The Arts/Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment, job hunting, career | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Books |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money, savings, finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets | <input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Home life | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (please write in the box below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NDIS | <input type="checkbox"/> Being a carer | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging, Retirement | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel | |

Q.4 And in terms of the topics covered in Panorama, which of the following would you say are MOST IMPORTANT to you? PLEASE TICK YOUR TOP THREE CHOICES

<input type="checkbox"/> People's recovery stories	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Linguistic Diversity/Multicultural issues.
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical health, sport, fitness, nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous issues <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking, food	<input type="checkbox"/> LGBT*IQ issues <input type="checkbox"/> The Arts/Music
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment, job hunting, career	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability <input type="checkbox"/> Books
<input type="checkbox"/> Money, savings, finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Literacy
<input type="checkbox"/> Current Affairs <input type="checkbox"/> Pets	<input type="checkbox"/> Numeracy
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Home life	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (please write in the box below)
<input type="checkbox"/> NDIS <input type="checkbox"/> Being a carer	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aging, Retirement <input type="checkbox"/> Travel	

And finally, could you tell us a little about yourself

Q.5 Are you... PLEASE TICK BOX, AS APPROPRIATE

Male

Female

Trans* person

Don't want to say

OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER HERE

Q.6 Are you.. PLEASE TICK BOX AS APPROPRIATE

A person who accesses Flourish Australia services?

A person who works for Flourish Australia?

A carer

Don't want to say

OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER HERE

Q.7 to which of the following age groups do you belong? PLEASE TICK BOX, AS APPROPRIATE

<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 46-55 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 18-25 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 56-65 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 26-35 years	<input type="checkbox"/> over 65 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 36-45 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't want to say

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING SEVEN QUICK QUESTIONS ABOUT PANORAMA!

People who access our services can hand this in to your local service manager or group facilitator. **Subscribers**, please use the Business Reply Envelope to return this to Panorama at Flourish Australia. **Or** address it to **Flourish Australia Publications Office REPLY PAID 88657 SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK NSW 2127**. No stamp required if reply paid address is used.

Three reasons to make sport a high priority in your child's life

By Warren Heggarty

It is important that children develop an interest in physical activity and sport as early as possible. The benefits; physical, social and mental, are all well-documented. Physical activity can provide a pathway to friendship and even provide protection from bullying. These three snapshots show that three people are vitally important to success: The students, the teachers and the parents.

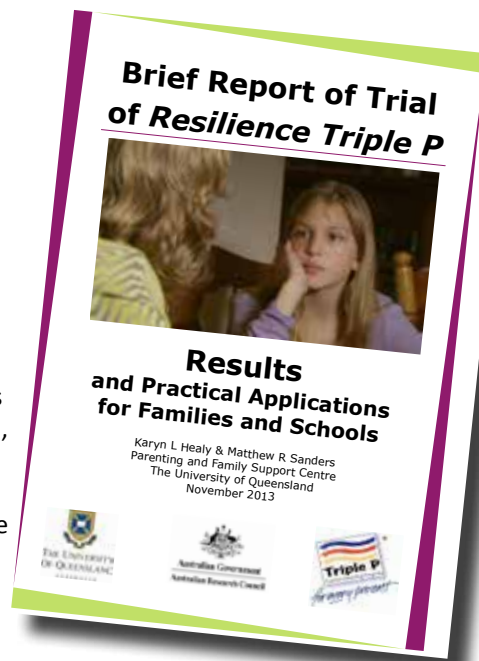
“P.E. marginalised”, says sports boss

The once ‘bedrock position of Physical Education (PE) in Australian schools has been slowly eroded over the past few decades. Australian Sports Commission chairman John Wylie told a business conference that PE and sport has been marginalised particularly ‘in government school curricula.’ To make matters worse, ‘Anyone with children knows the challenges that technology and iPhones present’ he told an Asialink business dinner which was looking at opportunities for Australia to move into Asia’s rising sport market. (Legrand & Akerman, 2018)

Mark McAllion, director of Maribyrnong College sports academy told The Australian that the emphasis on PE had slipped in crowded school curriculums. Schools had an important role to play in developing a child’s love of sport, athletic skills and confidence. ‘If those things happen [at school] there’s a chance that kids will continue to participate.’

John Wylie cited a lack of teachers ‘interested... in getting sweaty’ and he warned against Australia becoming complacent or indifferent about its sporting heritage. Sport is much more than just ‘getting sweaty’ though. It’s good for society.

Flourish Australia



And teachers are not the only people who need to be involved.

Netball shoots a goal for school

If education can lead us to sport, then it is also true that sport can lead us to education. In some indigenous communities, school attendance has been a problem that threatens to further entrench disadvantage.

According to Shari Comeagain, a young indigenous netballer from the isolated town of Mullewa in Western Australia ‘when [young people] are sitting around not doing things, it triggers them to do things they’re not supposed to do.’ (George, 2017)

Shari was part of ‘Shooting Stars,’ a pioneering program that used netball to reconnect indigenous girls in regional communities to education. She said she finds school ‘more interesting to engage with’ because of the program which had caused a general ten per cent rise in school attendance.

According to the Mullewa District High School Newsletter of August 2018, Shari Comeagain was one of a goodly number of young people who had 100 per cent attendance! ‘Missing School

= Missing Out’ the newsletter tells us. Shari intends to start university in 2019. (Mullewa DHS, 2018)

Bullying isn’t sporting

Some of us have bad memories of sport because of bullying, but avoiding sport robs children of a very effective protection against bullying. This is because participation in sport is a great way to make friends and making friends is one of the keys to dealing with bullies!

Resilience Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) is a new program devised by Dr Karyn Healy of the University of Queensland Parenting and Family Support Centre. Unlike a lot of anti-bullying programs, it focuses more on individual students and their parents.

“We know from decades of research,” said Dr Healy, “that what parents do makes a difference to children.” (Ironside, 2018) Parents can support kids in developing good relationships, for example by learning how to solve problems with their brothers and sisters. Parents are heavily involved in the program, attending all of the eight sessions, four with their children. Children are taught social and emotional skills for developing good relationships with peers and handling difficult situations like conflict. (Healy & Sanders, 2013)

Sport is also a way of “character building” where children learn about both winning and losing with grace, and about teamwork in the best sense of the word.

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Build bridges learn a new language

By Warren Heggarty

You've heard of the language barrier, but people who have learned other languages don't think of them as barriers. They think of languages as BRIDGES to other cultures.

Jasmin, who has travelled extensively especially in the Middle East, has acquired a smattering of Arabic. "Learning another language you get to use different parts of your brain, and it helps you to understand English better. Australia seems to be very backward with language learning. Even Americans learn Spanish."

"It is essential if you like to travel in parts of the world where English is not spoken. It is very daunting to travel without knowing the local language. It makes it a lot less stressful if you have a smattering."

"And once you learn one language, it's easier to pick up others."

Wendy was born in Malaysia. Her first

language is Cantonese, but she also learned to speak Malay, English and Mandarin as well. She married an Australian, so the English came in handy and she speaks it like a native. She teaches her four year old son to speak Chinese.

"Knowing another person's language makes them feel closer to you," says Wendy, "and they are more welcoming towards you."

"My dad wanted me to learn an Indian language, too," says Wendy, "and there was a Tamil school near where I lived in Malaya, but I never got around to it. One day I hope I might be able to learn Korean."

How is it possible to speak so many languages? "I would start with tuition," says Wendy, "then find someone who speaks the language and talk to them. Then watch TV shows and movies and repeat what they say so you sound just like them!"

Besides travel and migration, what motivates a person to make the effort to learn another language. Sometimes, it is economic. A lot of people learn English because it opens up job opportunities. People whose native language is English don't feel the same economic pressure to learn other languages.

There are other reasons, though. Religious reasons might lead you to learn

Koine Greek, Hebrew, Arabic. Some people learn "dead" languages like Latin and Sanskrit. An interest in a foreign culture might lead a person to learn a language. Even war can motivate language learning.

Not all languages other than English are foreign. What about Aboriginal languages? It is now possible to take University-level courses in Aboriginal languages such as Warlpiri, Yolngu (the language of Yothu Yindi) and Wiradjuri, among others.

Is it difficult to learn another language? Yes and no. For native English speakers, related languages like Dutch, French and Italian are going to seem easier than Arabic, Japanese or Basque. The Chinese writing system with several thousand characters seems notoriously complex, until you learn that it is really made up of combinations of a couple of hundred elements. Some languages like German and Greek have complex grammar, but many of the words are familiar to English speakers.

At the end of the day, there is no better way to get a taste of diversity than learning another language. There are plenty of courses available through Continuing Education Centres, TAFE colleges and Universities. There are quick courses for travellers and lengthy courses for people who are really serious.



Prescription for Addiction

Life, Pain and Drugs

By Warren Heggarty

When we think about drug abuse, most of us conjure an image of a young person taking illegal street drugs. A more likely image, though might be a middle-aged person taking drugs which require a doctors' prescription. This is according to the Penington Institute's latest drug report (Penington Institute, 2017).

The report found that people were misusing prescription pain killers and heroin more than ever. Between 2008 and 2014 there was a 90 per cent rise in prescription opioid deaths. The main cause of trouble involved using opioids in combination with other drugs or alcohol.

Surprisingly, 68 per cent of accidental deaths in 2016 involved people aged 30 to 59 (Ferguson, 2018).

One of the reasons why over-the-

counter sales of opioids (like codeine) were ended in February 2018 was in response to this rising problem. The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has suggested even tighter regulation (Powell, 2018).

This misuse of drugs might prompt the question "Why are people doing this to themselves?" But given the fact that life inevitably involves suffering, a better question might be "What is it that makes people NOT want to misuse drugs?" Life is hard, but drugs are easy, at least in the short term (Peterson, 2018, p. 125).

Mental Pain

In the case of people with mental health issues, there is sometimes an even greater temptation to abuse drugs. Peterson describes how constant anxiety can "render you impulsive so that you will jump...at any short term...opportunities (for) pleasure, no matter how sub-par, disgraceful or illegal." Hence, drugs and alcohol (Peterson, 2018, p. 17).

To some, this is blaming the victim, and

Peterson himself describes how the lifestyle of a "low status person" grinds one down in every way (Peterson, 2018, p. 16). This suggests that an increase in social justice might lead to a decrease in mental health issues and drug abuse (Rowe & Davidson, 2016, p. passim).

Peterson himself argues that with the existence of suffering being universal, it is up to the individual to find their own way to resist the impulse to take the easy road. He suggests "deferred gratification", sticking to long-term aims and resisting impulses for short term solutions (Peterson, 2018, p. 93).

Physical Pain

Of course, sometimes the pain of life is physical. What then? One man who had been taking opioids for years following major spinal surgery told Sian Powell "Gradually, over the years it's like a cloud comes over your whole mind. You don't even realise it's happening..." Until you stop the painkillers (Powell, 2018).

Michael Nicholas, director of pain management at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, told Powell "Drugs don't deal with the cause of...pain. They may dull it, but they dull you, too... unfortunately, you have to accept living with pain." He suggests that people should talk to an expert who can help work out other ways to live that don't involve trying to avoid or escape from pain. (Powell, 2018)

As always, if you have any concerns with the medication you take, discuss it with a qualified medical practitioner and or pharmacist.

To make sure you get the right dosage, keep a regular medication routine. Ask your pharmacist about safe ways to store and organise your medications if you take more than one, like a "pill organiser." Sticking to a routine can help avoid mistakes. See more in this issue's Back On Track Health on page 21

If you are struggling, call Lifeline on 13 11 14



LEFT: When we lack connections with other people, life's inevitable up-hill climbs look so much steeper!

PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

has the highest rate of any age group at 39.3 per 100,000 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). It is more than double the rate for teenagers.

Barbour tells the story of an 82-year-old woman who was widowed after 57 years of marriage. During the long years while her husband lived with dementia, she was his carer. When he passed away, her life fell apart. For the first time in her life, she was lonely.

Loneliness, depression and ageing

Good company is a lifesaver

By Warren Heggarty

On the eve of the Royal Commission into Aged Care, ABC Political Reporter Lucy Barbour wrote that loneliness can be a major killer among elderly people (Barbour, 2018). There are a number of factors involved, but they seem to point to the lack of hope that comes with being isolated.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures in 2015, the over-85 age group has the fourth highest suicide rate. When we look at the figures for males only, we find that this age group

Her physical and mental health deteriorated because she didn't look after herself properly, lacking the will and the energy. "Loneliness can be very dangerous," the woman said. What saved her was joining up with a senior's program where she was able to make friends and have something to look forward to. She now reports that she is on top of the world and her health has improved beyond her "wildest dreams."

This demonstrates that while loneliness and depression are seemingly inescapable traps, becoming connected to other people again (or even for the first time) can turn things around. "Good company can be a lifesaver," says Barbour. She's right. Many people who access Flourish Australia's services will say the same thing.

Ageing

When you look at the aged care situation from a distance, you see a massively complex problem that many people say our society is not coping with. The economic and medical burdens are often

spoken about, and with a strong sense of doom. When you look at the problem as a matter of helping people to find new connections with other people, perhaps it doesn't look quite so dismal.

Society's attitude towards older people is ironic given the fact that we are living longer and longer. In an ABC PM news report last year, Ky Chow reported these comments from Monash University Professor Paul Komesarof:

"Many older Australians had a mindset that not being as productive as they once were meant they had little to live for. They may well express to their doctor the view that they don't want care to be prolonged. Not because they fear losing their capabilities or their capacities, but because they don't want to impose on the rest of society, it's their sense of responsibility. And of course that's a terrible tragedy because these are the people who have actually created the wealth." (Chow, 2017)

A Shame

In the same report, dementia expert Henry Brodaty noted that in some cultures, failing to provide proper care for elderly people was a thing of great shame. Alas, this often leads to families avoiding nursing home placements altogether even though that might be a better outcome for some people. Think of those with high-care needs who lacked family members with the necessary competence to provide that care at home.

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Shared equity for steeep housing prices

Innovative shared equity scheme to help low income earners buy homes.

Social housing schemes have mostly concentrated on affordable rent. What about affordable ownership? A new housing development in North Melbourne, Victoria, might be a model for the future.

By Warren Heggarty

There is no more fundamental form of economic security than owning your own home. Yet home ownership is portrayed as being beyond the reach of even moderately well-off people these days. This has not stopped people looking for new ways to foster home ownership opportunities even among low-income people.

In June Panorama, we told how Flourish Australia has been involved in the Guildford affordable housing project under the National Rental Affordability Scheme. We developed a block of 41 home units in Guildford, 21 of which are for rent at rates 20 per cent below the market rate, and 20 of which are for sale. Under the National Rental Affordability Scheme, the government provides incen-

tives to allow for lower rents (Heggarty, 2018, p. 36).

What sort of options are there for lower mortgages to allow for actual ownership by people on lower incomes?

The Barnett Foundation and its partners in Victoria have developed the 34 unit Melbourne Apartment Project in North Melbourne which uses a shared-equity scheme called the Barnett Model, or the “deferred second mortgage.”

This is only a small project compared to the 82,000 long waiting list for public housing in that state (Mills, 2018), and people who are already in public housing find it very difficult to move into private housing (Redman, 2018), but it might point the way to a future large scale solution.

Buyers take out a mortgage on 63% of the apartment’s value. The remaining 37% is a deferred, no-interest second mortgage which is not payable until the homeowner sells the apartment. “Instead of taking a profit margin, the developer uses the proceeds to fund the second mortgages.” (Redman, 2018)

What’s the catch? Dr Kate Raynor, a researcher at Melbourne University, says that the most obvious obstacle to this working on a large scale is that the developer has to set aside their own profit. “This is a philanthropic venture,” she told ABC Radio’s Alicia Loxley.

Can the Barnett Model work on a larger scale? According to the Melbourne University report into this project, it can. It

provides “sufficient cash flow to support an expanding portfolio of projects over time. This is predominantly as lump-sum payments from home purchasers, financed through-out mortgage loans from banks, allow the developer to recoup the cost of developing the housing on settlement.” This is where it is different from the more common rental model of affordable housing (Raynor, Palm, & O’Neil, 2018, p. 5).

What has been the effect on the purchasers? According to the report’s “lived experience analysis,” there have been “significant improvements in

feelings of safety and security, a sense of ownership and great satisfaction with the capacity to build equity in this project (Raynor, Palm, & O’Neil, 2018, p. 5).

One purchaser interviewed by the ABC said that moving out of public housing and becoming a home owner had changed the way he looked at himself. He said he no longer has a “poor person’s mentality” and looks to the future with more optimism (Mills, 2018).

Dr Raynor told Elizabeth Redman of The Australian that the model was a good solution for low to moderate income households, but would not help those on “very low” incomes. However, “community housing” providers would be well placed to adopt this model. Future developments could include a mix of market rate housing and Barnett Model housing as a form of cross-subsidy.

The Barnett Foundation manages the model as a Public Benevolent Institution. Its partners in this project include the University of Melbourne, The Melbourne City Mission, Resilient Melbourne and the City of Melbourne.

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Aim high!

If your dreams don't scare you a bit, maybe they aren't quite big enough? PHOTO BY WARREN HEGGARTY

Battling the Tyranny of Low Expectations

By Grant J Everett

Even if you haven't heard of "the tyranny of low expectations", you may have experienced it firsthand. The tyranny of low expectations happens when somebody is told they are useless, hopeless, good for nothing and will go nowhere until they finally believe it for themselves. Sadly, this can leave you feeling unworthy and incapable of pursuing life's pleasures and fulfilments, so goals like furthering your education, finding a decent job and meeting your soulmate can feel impossibly out of reach.

For ANYONE to believe this is profoundly sad.

While the tyranny of low expectations can affect anybody, those of us with mental health issues would almost certainly be personally familiar with it to some degree. Being described in negative ways is usually at the core of it, with reductive labels and other forms of stigma compounding these beliefs until we

are convinced that we cannot go as far in life as a "normal" person, as though a mental health diagnosis automatically excludes us from good things. As words can build us up or tear us down, this is why Flourish Australia has a major emphasis on using recovery-based language across our entire organisation.

Difficult life experiences can cause already-low expectations to plunge even further. Notable examples include substance abuse issues, missing out on a good education, being socially isolated, having bad work experiences, coming in contact with the Justice Health system or Corrective system, coming from a broken family, having a nasty breakup with a romantic interest, and so on.

The wounds of low expectations can be inflicted by parents, siblings, teachers, "friends", employers, neighbours, mental health professionals, and even ourselves. They can cut especially deep during our formative years, and it's not unusual for people to carry such injuries for their entire lives. This leads to existing rather than truly living.

Fear

The tyranny of low expectations often expresses itself as a profound fear of failure. Does fear prevent you from trying to achieve your goals? Just how likely does

success have to be before you'll give something a go?

While most worthwhile things in life don't come easily or instantly, refusing to try is without a doubt the most guaranteed path to failure. Yes, challenges can be scary, but we need to face them in order to grow. Avoiding challenges only get more and more deeply ingrained, making it harder and harder to venture out of your comfort zone in time.

Failing all the way to success?

Thanks to encouragement from my support people, I have attempted to achieve goals that I thought were almost impossible. Applying for a research writing job with The University of Sydney is a prime example. As I don't even have a HSC, I was sure my resume would go straight into their slush pile. However, to my surprise, I got the job, and I very much enjoyed working on a mental health research project at the University for 12 months. My latest attempt at reaching for something out of my league was applying for a job as a Deputy Commissioner with the NSW Mental Health Commission. In this case I wasn't successful, but I definitely did my best.

To be clear, I have failed at many, many things in life. But success is impossible without failure, and the wisdom and experience you gain from falling down is truly golden.

The solution?

Like any habit, there's plenty you can do about the tyranny of low expectations. Changing the way we are wired up, especially after a long time, might not be easy. It can take effort and patience. With the right support, we are all capable of achieving more, and recovery is possible for EVERYONE. We achieve this one day at a time, like the individual brushstrokes that make up a painting.

Finally, don't feel like you need to face your challenges alone. There's nothing wrong with involving your support network. Flourish Australia, for instance, can help you to find housing and employment, connect up with training and education, provide safe places where you can meet new people, and generally help you to build the life you want.

We all have great potential. All you have to do is try.

Back On Track Health Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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



My walking and balance

Staying upright!

By Warren Heggarty

Everyone is at risk of falling. In fact, falling can be fun (if done properly) and is built into a lot of sports such as Gymnastics, Rugby Union and Rugby League. Unfortunately, if you do not have good general fitness, falling can be dangerous. This is especially true for older people, people with serious medical conditions, people who take medicine that affects their balance, and people who have no regular exercise.

What causes balance problems?

The causes are not usually very dramatic. Sometimes just sitting down for a long time can make you wonky when you stand up. That's usually easily fixed. People who are very anxious can feel dizzy because of overbreathing (as in a panic attack). General unfitness and lack of physical activity is a common problem. Other causes include taking some medications, arthritis, cardiovascular problems (like hypotension), neuropathy (nerve problems), eye problems, inner

ear problems and long term illnesses of the central nervous system (American Geriatrics Society).

What can I do about it?

You can find a tip sheet on preventing falls around the house below. Two of the most common hazards is storing stuff on the floor and having loose rugs in walkways.

www.healthinaging.org/files/documents/tipsheets/falls_prevention.pdf

Regular exercise can help you to keep your balance and prevent falls, according to research presented by Assoc Prof Anne Tiedemann of Sydney University. For best results, the exercise should:

1. Provide you with a moderate or high challenge to your balance
2. Take a sufficient amount of time, say more than three hours per week.
3. Be regular and ongoing.

What sort of exercises can I do?

Prof Tiedemann says that exercises which help prevent falls are not just for old people or people at high risk from falls. Everybody can benefit. The exercises can be undertaken in a group setting or at home. The NSW government website "Active and Healthy" has an illustrated guide to home balance exercise which you can see online here:

www.activeandhealthy.nsw.gov.au/staying-active/exercise-at-home/

To give you a couple of examples, there is "heel to toe walking," which can help you keep balance when walking through a narrow space. Another is "knee raises", which helps you going up stairs or getting on and off buses (I really need to do that one myself!). Have a look for yourself, or ask your GP or support worker. (NSW Health)

If you prefer to do it in a group, Active and Healthy has a location finder which helps you find exercise venues near you.

Strength training and brisk walking can complement balance training however, as always, people in poor shape or with certain medical conditions should clear it with their doctor before starting strenuous exercise (Tiedemann).

What can I do to prevent falls in the community

It is always a good idea to encourage one another to do get regular exercise and to keep it ongoing. Where preventing falls is concerned, this is especially true of middle aged or older people.

Support staff can look for opportunities to promote exercise as a part of regular activities. They can also help raise awareness of the problem of falls among people who have a high risk (Tiedemann).

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PHOTO WARREN HEGGARTY, STYLING MS JADE

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

Back On Track Health Your Physical Health and Wellbeing

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



General Information and services

Sometimes it's hard to know where to start. Below we have listed a number of websites and phone numbers you can use when you might not know exactly where to start.

National Health Services Directory
www.nhsd.com.au

HealthDirect, 24 hr telephone health advice line
1800 022 222

HealthDirect Website
www.healthdirect.gov.au

13 HEALTH, a 24 hour telephone health advice line for QLD
13 43 25 84
www.qld.gov.au

National Home Doctor Service
www.homedoctor.com.au
137 425

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

MY HEALTH NEEDS CHECKLIST

The My Health Needs Checklist (illustrated below) is a booklet that helps you keep track of your physical health and wellbeing. Our physical health is an important part of our overall wellness. We can use the Checklist to review our health and highlight the things that we would like to talk about to our Doctors.

The list has 32 items, including some suggestions about common questions people might have. There is also space for you to make notes or write down your own questions.

There is also a section to write down what you want to talk to the doctor about and to record what the doctor said. This is important because it is easy to forget things or to get off the track when you are visiting a doctor. You could even show your Checklist to the doctor.

Just in case you need some advice after hours, the checklist has the number for HealthDirect Australia, a 24-hour telephone health advice line staffed by Registered Nurses to provide health advice: 1800 022 222.

If you want more information about the My Health Needs Checklist, Freecall 1300 779 270 or email info@flourishaustralia.org.au

These are the things I would like to talk to someone about:



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

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Regular or intense pain

- Do you experience regular or intense pain anywhere in your body? Eg. arms, legs, face, back?
- Do you have an old injury that can sometimes cause pain?

By Warren Heggarty

According to Pain Australia, everyone, including medical practitioners, could benefit from a better understanding of chronic pain. Like mental health issues, there is stigma associated with it, a sense that person with chronic pain is somehow making it all up. Pain is invisible to others and this can add to the frustration when it interferes with your day-to-day living.

Chronic pain is usually defined as lasting for more than three months. Most regular aches and pains are easily fixed with analgesics or anti-inflammatory medicine. However, chronic, intense pain is often difficult to treat. According to Professor Philip Siddall, Director of the Pain Management Service at Greenwich Hospital, medicines for nerve and other chronic pain have only a partial effect at best. "People have asked me to amputate their leg, just to get rid of

the fire that never goes away. With this desperation and distress, it is tempting to try anything in the hope that it will give relief." (Siddall, 2018)

Another form of chronic pain is "phantom limb pain." Because our brains carry a "map" of our bodies, even if part of the body is no longer there (following an amputation) the part of the brain onto which it is "mapped" still is. It is thought that this generates the sometimes excruciating pain that people feel after an amputation (Stephenson, 2013, Stephens, 2014)

According to Michael Nicholas, director of pain education and management programs at the Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney says that opioids have "very limited utility" for chronic pain. This is partly because their effectiveness reduces over time. And while they might initially dull the pain, "they dull you, too." They merely mask the pain without doing anything about it (Powell, 2018).

Living with pain

This raises the related issue of opioid addiction (see ACTION Recovery Conversations May page 3) which is an increasing problem, especially in rural and remote areas where there is not the same accesses to alternative pain management methods. Nicholas says that people need to work out other ways to live that don't involve trying to avoid or escape from pain. "Unfortunately, you have to accept living with pain." (Powell, 2018)

The Australian Pain Management Association recommends that patients be involved in all decision-making about their treatment. According to Australian Pain Management Association, there

are four main approaches to pain:

- Psychological strategies, for example acceptance therapy and cognitive-behavioural therapy
- Physical strategies, for example avoiding pain triggers and pacing your physical activity (bearing in mind that the idea is not to avoid living!)
- Medicinal strategies with regular reviews
- Social strategies, for example support groups, family and friends.

This is just a general discussion of some types of chronic pain. Always consult your doctor to get qualified advice.

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



Heart attack

Another story about our old friend the Chairman of Country Cottage



People with mental health issues live an average of 20 to 25 years less. We can help ourselves live longer and better by becoming aware of heart health!

by Ken Hua (Retired Flourish Australia Employee)

Part I

It was very early morning of Wednesday, 4th April 2018, when our old friend The Chairman of Country Cottage was feeling kind of short of breath. He was walking unsteadily and had chest pain. He had been feeling kind of restless and found it hard to fall asleep since 10.00pm the night before. Our Chairman was trying to put the pain out of his mind on this quiet cold night and he kept telling himself: 'Perhaps it is my depression causing the problem. He was used to depression and could have handled it accordingly.

Our Chairman and the Lady of the House looked at the clock and as time dragged

ABOVE: Our Chairman came close to meeting some REAL angels!

PHOTO FROM KEN HUA/ CHINESE GARDEN SYDNEY

on the pain became worse and worse. A little before 4.00am, our Chairman turned to the Lady of the House and said:

'Madam, I think you should call 000 for an ambulance because I think I am having a heart attack.'

"You should have called us at 10 o'clock last night, Mr Chairman."

'Mr. Chairman,' she replied, 'please just take it easy. I think it is depression that is causing the problem. You have been through this many times before. Just relax and the pain will go away.'

But the pain was so unbearable our

Chairman could not stand any more. So they finally called 000 at 4.00am, Wednesday, 4th April 2018 to dispatch an ambulance to his house to rush him to Liverpool Hospital.

'Mr. Chairman,' said the paramedic officer, 'I'm just wondering what time you started having the pain?'

'Since 10.00 o'clock last night,' replied the Chairman.

'Oh dear!' exclaimed the Paramedic officer. 'Your pain started at 10.00 o'clock last night and you waited until 4.00am the next morning? You should have called us at 10.00 o'clock last night, Mr Chairman.'

'Officers, I hope everything will be okay with me and that my number is not up yet.'

Since our Chairman's case was extremely urgent, he was rushed to Emergency Department immediately at 4.20am. At first he was placed in one of the wards for observation still hoping that his condition was not too bad. The real life threatening trauma struck our old fragile Chairman at 6.00am when he was moaning with unbearable shortness of breath and chest pain. Seeing that the two nurses on duty immediately rushed our Chairman off for emergency surgery.

'Mr. Chairman, just relax! You are experiencing a heart attack... or maybe two heart attacks. Don't worry! Everything is going to be okay. We will try our very best to help you, Mr. Chairman.'

There were two doctors (our Chairman presumed that they were cardiologists) and two nurses in the Emergency Room. Although he was in great pain, he was still mentally alert. However he was quite anxious and worried!

Then he asked the doctors where was the Lady of the House? At this crucial moment, he needed her to be by his side to give him support and encouragement.

'Doctors, you must find out where the Lady of the House has gone I am on the brink of life and death and if she comes late then I won't see her for the last time

Reader's Story

in my life.'

'Mr. Chairman, everything is going to be okay, we do this kind of surgery everyday. Maybe your madam got lost because Liverpool Hospital is a huge hospital. Anybody can get lost here...'

Enter the Chief Cardiologist

Our Chairman's case was quite urgent and about ten minutes later a gentleman, Chief Cardiologist appeared in front of our Chairman and he greeted our Chairman respectfully:

Mr. Chairman, I am Professor Dominic Leung. I have heard a lot about you, Sir. You are the author of 'The Two Boys and I.' (books I & II) and I also visit your website: www.bloghuasungcang.wordpress.com (Ken's Blog) to view some of your short humorous stories and real life stories. From the books, I learnt that you have been doing some volunteer work for Fairfield Rehabilitation Centre and Fairfield Mental Health Service for a number of years supporting people with mental health issues. In addition you also do some volunteer work for the community at Villawood Senior Citizens' Centre. You are just terrific, Sir! It is my great pleasure to meet you tonight, Mr. Chairman. Could I please shake your hands to show my respect before I do my homework on you?'

'Professor Leung, it is my great honour to meet you Sir! The pleasure is all mine. You are just being humble, Sir.'

"Mr. Chairman, I am going to do my home work on you now. I am going to give you an injection and put you into sleep for one and a half hour. The surgery takes about that time. After the surgery, you will be transferred to the ward for recovery.

'Professor Leung, can I ask you a question? Will there be any risk and am I going to be okay, Sir?'

'Mr. Chairman, everything is going to be fine because we do this sort of job every single day. Okay, I am going to put you to sleep now.'

We hope you will read the next part of this exciting story to see how the Chairman pulls through and whether they find the Lady of the House in Time!

To be continued...

Heart Attack: What is at stake for people who live with disabilities?

A heart attack happens when there is a sudden, complete blockage of an artery that supplies blood to an area of your heart. As a result, some of the heart muscle starts to die. The longer you leave the blockage untreated, the more the heart muscle is damaged. A doctor needs to restore the blood flow quickly; otherwise the damage to the heart muscle is permanent.

Too many people lose their lives because they wait too long to get treatment for heart attack. If you think you are having a heart attack, call Triple Zero (000). Ask the operator for an ambulance and do not hang up.

Besides damage to the heart, there is also a risk that your heart may stop beating altogether (cardiac arrest). In this case, Ambulance or hospital staff may use a defibrillator to give your heart a controlled electric shock that may make it start beating again.

Let's learn from Stewart's experience

Stewart, 63, has worked for many years as a table hand at an Australian Disability Enterprise in Belmore, NSW. Lately he has been transitioning to retirement. Stewart is one of those people who never complains about things.

A couple of years ago, his mother and sister became worried that he seemed to be short of breath. It turns out that he had been having severe chest pains for three days.

When they realised this, they got him to hospital straight away. There, they discovered that because of the delay in seeking help, his heart had been seriously damaged. This is because his heart muscle had not received enough blood and oxygen during that time. For a while, things looked very dangerous.

Fortunately, after a long period of rehabilitation and a radical change of lifestyle, Stewart was able to resume work. However, it meant he had to move out of his mother's home (she is over 90) and live with his sister. Of course, he still has to be very careful about his diet and general health!

Here are some more heart health tips

- Be smoke free
- Manage your cholesterol
- Manage your blood pressure
- Manage diabetes
- Be physically active (less sitting down!)
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods (easy on the salt!)
- and very importantly: Look after your mental health

Have a more detailed look at the Heart Foundation's tips for heart health here: <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/your-heart/keep-your-heart-healthy>

Go to Flourish Australia's Back On Track Health microsite and click on the 'Chest Pain and Heart Health' card for more information. <https://both.flourishaustralia.org.au/>



ABOVE: Stewart B.
PHOTO COURTESY OF EDWINA HARRIS

Showcase your town



In the 2018-19 Recovery Forum Series



At the Armidale forum in August. Top: (left to right) Lisa, Julia and Karen. Middle: Aaron and Jason. Bottom: Steve, Daniel and Isaac. PHOTOS BY PETER FARRUGIA

By Peter Farrugia

Meeting new people and hearing their stories is what I love about the Recovery Forum. It is a real honour to share those experiences with people.

The 2018/19 Flourish LIVE Recovery Forum brings people who access Flourish Australia services together to celebrate the best parts of their recovery. This year's program contains fresh, innovative content that will support people to think, share, inspire and grow.

Attendance at the one-day forums is free and is always an enjoyable experience participants. It includes a fun art activity; reflective practice on people's experiences of their local Flourish Australia service; an interesting trivia challenge to test people's knowledge of world trends and happenings; an open forum for discussion and dialogue; and of course, a free healthy lunch.

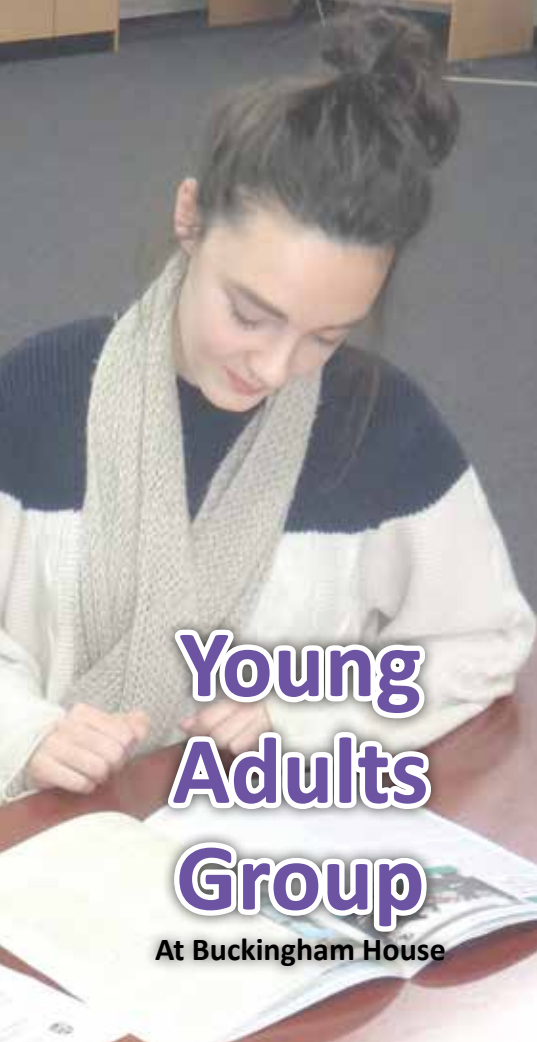
The Flourish LIVE Recovery Forum promises to be the best yet. As Flourish Australia's Manager Peer Workforce, I am by taking the forum to as many rural and regional locations as possible. Making it a local gathering by bringing the forum to the people increases accessibility and convenience. People have the opportunity to showcase their town and extend local hospitality.

As an added attraction, we are inviting local Community Advisory Council Representatives to co-present the forum. This is a terrific way of showcasing their role and responsibility to the local community. Representatives will be supported to participate even if they have no prior experience.

Flourish Australia's Community Advisory Council is a group of people who access Flourish Australia services from across New South Wales and South East Queensland, who act as representatives and provide advice and information to Flourish Australia on a range of matters. These are very important roles with very influential responsibilities. We'll make it as easy as possible for representatives to develop skills and achieve great outcomes, I look forward to working closely with them.

The 2018/19 forum series officially commenced in Armidale in August. Flourish Australia Armidale's Acting Manager Tanya Hague was very pleased with the turnout. "We had a great response from locals and were joined by visitors from Flourish Australia's Tamworth and Inverell services. It speaks to the quality of the forum and to people's commitment to their personal recovery" added Tanya.

If you would like to know more, contact Peter Farrugia, Manager Peer Workforce via peter.farrugia@flourishaustralia.org.au or (02) 9393-9037.



Young Adults Group At Buckingham House

By Shana Atkins

The Young Adult's Group is a program offered by Buckingham House that provides fun and constructive activities on Fridays and Saturdays for young people between the ages of 18 and 30. Running the youth program at Buck House allows us to use the existing resources and equipment, so we have a full gym, a table tennis table, and enough room for dramatic and artistic expression. As all of the young people are adults, they are also welcome to participate in any of the groups or activities in the regular Buck House program, with tennis being one of the most popular examples.

Our Friday program runs from 12pm to 3pm, and includes a yummy lunch provided by our cultural cooking group, though sometimes we have a BBQ instead. There are two groups we run on Fridays: a drama group, and an art group. We use the drama group to engage in light and fun non-confrontational interactions that allow us to get to know each other better and build on our social skills, while in the art class we express our creative sides with paint, clay, origami and other mediums. We hold the drama group around 1pm, and the art group at 2pm.

On Saturdays we all meet at Central station and go on a fun outing. We get up to all sorts of things: bush walks, theme parks, museums, and mini golf, to name a few, and it's a great way to get everyone out of the house and into the community.

The world can feel like a scary place, what with all the competing demands of work, education, personal relationships, and social media standards, and it can be easy to get lost in the whirlwind of it all and lose track of our emotional and mental well-being. The kind of early intervention we offer in the Young Adult's Group can prevent further slides from happening and help the participants to become all they want to be. Young people should engage with the program because it's a great opportunity to be a part of something larger than yourself, to come together and contribute to a group that is striving for harmony and optimism.

While at least half of our young adult members have been attending our program since the start, they are free to come and go as they please. This means our exact numbers vary, but we are supporting 10 or so people regularly at any given time. We hope to continue seeing new faces as word gets out, and this is why we held the Open Day BBQ on Friday the 27th of July: we want to start conversations about our program and highlight what we can offer to young adults in the community. From all the positive feedback we heard, I believe this was achieved (thanks for coming, by the way!).

While some Flourish Australia groups and services have a set running time, people are welcome to attend our program for as long as they like. And even once a participant passes 30, they're still welcome to attend the other groups we run at Buck House.

There are many advantages to early intervention, so our basic gameplan is all about getting our participants back on track with becoming adults. We teach them essential life skills, provide opportunities to practise being social, encourage them to engage with study and training and to find employment, and to seek out sustainable housing situations. Generally, we support young people to develop their overall well-being and to reach for their personal goals.

I would say that all the activities we offer the young people are a combination of enjoyable and constructive, and we are always trying to encourage recovery and develop psychosocial strengths. We have a focus on healthy living, and promote exercise and physical activity with bush walks, bike riding and coastal walks, to name just a few types. We also have a sobriety policy for anybody attending the group, and encourage participants to make wise choices with regards to substance use.

Regardless of life experiences or background, anyone who feels they would like some mental health support in a recovery-oriented space is welcome to check out if the program is for them. While you don't necessarily need to have had contact with a clinical mental health service, most of the participants have. There's no strict criteria when it comes to diagnosis or treatment history.

When it comes to what we want the young people to take away from our program, I think if somebody feels that the group is a safe and supported place that has helped their state of mind, then we've succeeded. I believe that the exact definition of "success" is unique to each person, as long as it has allowed them to progress towards their recovery. But even if the young people feel unwell or take a few steps backwards or struggle at times, that's okay. We aim to help make those experiences less severe and less frequent.

I'm a Peer Worker. In a nutshell, I help support young people who are experiencing mental health issues to work towards their personal goals. I do this by facilitating a fun and respectful space for recovery. While I am the only staff member who runs this group, we often have social work students who come and help out. Their contribution is greatly valued. We also have a secondary team with another peer worker and mental health workers who can assist with the program if needed.

To be a Peer Worker, there is an expectation that you have to have a lived experience of mental health issues. I am also three quarters of the way through my Social Work Bachelor's Degree, which I've found to be a very helpful addition to my own lived experience.

Breakfast with John Brogden



“Workplaces need to be redesigned to promote mental health, or there will be consequences,” says this business leader with a lived experience of mental health issues.

Story by Warren Heggarty
Pictures by Neil Fenelon

While in the Northside Clinic following a very public attempt on his own life, John Brogden’s psychiatrist assured him that things would get better. “Why are you teasing me?” he thought.

The former NSW Opposition leader’s fall a few days earlier came as a result of inappropriate comments he had made in a pub. The end of his political career in 2005 had been so precipitous and so complete that he could not see any hope. To make matters worse, the media showed no mercy and continued to attack even after he had resigned.

Having had such a high profile, John

“We commonly have CPR machines in workplaces now, but we have just as much need to be prepared for mental health problems as cardiac arrests.”

received many messages from people he didn’t even know. He even received one on a piece of fluoro yellow paper all the way from the Northern Territory. “Mr Ogden [sic], we all make mistakes, that’s why pencils have rubbers on the end of them.”

“It’s a different world now,” says John. “When I later became head of Manchester Unity Insurance, I decided to go public about taking medication and seeing a psychiatrist. The PR person was horrified. ‘Oh God, no don’t do that!’”

If you had cancer, for example, you might expect some empathy or sympa-

Mental Health Month Business Breakfast THANK YOUs

The breakfast was hosted by Flourish Australia at our Figtree Conference Centre as part of Mental Health Month. Our thanks to Warwick Pye from Schepisi Communications and Sasha Stepanovic and Fiona Welch, from AMPS Technology, for donating the raffle prizes.

It was our pleasure to acknowledge the \$600 raised by our friends and neighbours at Mirvac through the power drill raffle they ran recently.

It is fantastic to see people and businesses, helping out where they can to make a difference. We were able to raise \$1,045 from the raffle for the “Young People’s Formal Project” (read more details on the opposite page).

thy in the workplace, but with mental health issues, the approach has often been disciplinary!

‘Presentee-ism’

We commonly have CPR machines in workplaces now, but we have just as much need to be prepared for mental health problems as cardiac arrests. Workplace mental health is the “next front line.” Presenteeism, where people are at work but are not really able to do their best because of stress, is a growing problem.

Pretty soon, because we’re not getting it right, John predicts there will be massive litigation which will change the legal framework to ensure that mental safety is recognised as much as physical safety. Designing a mentally healthy workplace - a reflective workplace - “is the smart thing to do. It makes not just good sense, but good dollars-and-cents to provide a healthy workplace.”

Meteoric

Towards the end of his political career John says, “I was spinning out of control, trying to keep busy to blot out my problems.” He described a meteoric career rise in politics. A member of Parliament

at 27, an Opposition front bencher at 30, and leader of the Opposition at 33 (a record young age for Australia).

“Everything was going well, but I was miserable. Behind the scenes I was very angry. I was a horrible person to work for.” Although Mark Orr pointed out diplomatically that three of John’s closest friends used to work for him at that time, so they must have seen the good side.

John described a work schedule that was anything but healthy. Sometimes working from 6AM till 11PM six or seven days, a cancelled engagement would see him trying to organise an alternative appearance, instead of having a night off. We have read stories about people in various professions, especially young doctors and lawyers, having to deal with crushingly long work hours.

Life outside work

John’s wife Lucy, a psychologist, worked on a report which found that people cope better when they have a life outside of work. Sleeping in the office won’t do you any good, but coaching Netball will give you an alternative positive focus for your energies. This is especially necessary in professions like law and medicine where negative things are often unavoidable focal points in your work life.

Being able to share his story openly is important to John, and it is even more important that he is in the public eye and in leadership positions. Currently he is Chair of Lifeline and CEO of Landcom.

John expressed alarm at the recent nine per cent rise in suicide figures. “It’s frightening that we’re going backwards.” He says we need to set a target to reduce that figure by, say, 20% in five years.

John acknowledges that because of its success in assisting people in crisis, Lifeline has become associated with a negative message that needs to be presented more as a positive message of hope.

So if you are struggling anytime and need to borrow some hope to get you through, you can call Lifeline on 13 11 14.



ABOVE: Elizabeth Harlow looks on as Tyler, who accesses the Penrith YCLSS, addresses the Mental Health Month business breakfast. PHOTO NEIL FENELON

Young People’s Formal Project

It is a common thing for young adults to miss out on important life events, things that mark our passage through life’s stages.

Things like getting a drivers’ licence, going on your first date, graduating from University or TAFE, your 21st birthday... these things can be postponed by mental health issues arising at the same time.

Tyler, who accesses Flourish Australia’s YCLSS (Youth Community Liaison Support Service) at Penrith, NSW, spoke to this issue at the Mental Health Month Business Breakfast.

Elizabeth Harlow, who runs the YCLSS at Penrith told the breakfast that one of the most common things missed is the High School Formal. The Formal has big significance and it is an essential coming of age celebration for many. One of the benefits of the breakfast was raising of \$1,045 towards the project which will see people who missed out on their Formals get another chance.

Panorama hopes to be able to bring you more details about the Formal in future issues.

BELOW: Mark Orr (CEO of Flourish Australia) Prof Elizabeth Moore (Chair of Flourish Australia) Carmel Tebbutt (CEO of Mental Health Coordinating Council), John Brogden and Charles Moore (CEO of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority).



PHOTO NEIL FENELON

Step up / Step Down



Flourish Australia partners in rural sub-acute units

By Warren Heggarty

In the June 2018 issue of Panorama you may have read about The Resolve Program, the aim of which is to reduce the amount of time people spend in hospital for mental health issues. Flourish Australia is also involved in two Sub-Acute units in Dubbo and Bathurst whose aim is pretty similar. Panorama spoke to manager Sheree Masling about them.

There are approximately 20 Flourish Australia staff employed across two sub acute mental health units in Dubbo and Bathurst. Dubbo unit is officially known as Barraminya (Wiradjuri for “recover”) and we are pleased to hear the Bathurst unit is officially known as Panorama, though we suspect it is named after the famous mountain in Bathurst rather than our magazine!

Barraminya and Panorama are a partnership between Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) and Flourish Australia and are situated on the grounds of their respective hospitals. The partnership began in October 2017 and is funded for 3 years, with the possibility of two one year extensions.

The team at Barraminya and Panorama consists of staff from Western NSW Local Health District (registered nurses, social worker, Psychologist, Psychiatrist and Doctors) and staff from Flourish Australia (mental health workers, peer workers and an Occupational Therapist).

The Flourish Australia staff are based in

ABOVE: Some of the staff members are, L-R, Emma Brown (Peer Worker, Barraminya), Jenny Craig (Senior Cluster Manager, Bathurst), Sheree Masling (Manager, Parkes), Danielle Edwards (Senior Mental Health Worker, Barraminya), Germaine Rich (Peer Worker, Barraminya) and Amy Vandervegt (Occupational Therapist, Barraminya and Panorama).

“It’s the first time I’ve felt connected with someone in a setting like this... felt like you saw me as an equal and that made feel comfortable and relaxed, and very much reduced my anxiety and confusion around being at Panorama... I felt that you listened and made an effort to understand me as a person”

– Mr B, a person who accessed the service

both locations, with Manager Sheree Masling, based off site in Parkes.

Barraminya serves a very wide geographical area, extending across Northern NSW (excluding a zone served by Broken Hill). During the first year of operation there were approximately 180 people who sought support through Barraminya.

Panorama covers a smaller geographical area which is more densely populated. 196 people sought support through Panorama in the first year of operation.

“The partnership is working really well,”

says Sheree. “Each unit can support up to ten people at one time. The units operate a step up/step down model of care.” The focus of the partnership is to work together adopting the strengths of both organisations, in order to best support the needs of the people who use the service, providing recovery-based rehabilitation services.

The step up/step down model of care provides early intervention in a subacute inpatient setting for people with a mental illness living in the community, as well as a transition service for people returning to the community from an acute inpatient stay in a hospital based facility. “While there is no set time frame a person can/has to stay in the units, we have found over the first twelve months of operation that the average length of stay for people has been approximately 11 days,” Sheree says.

Flourish Australia staff provide non-clinical, recovery-based support to people accessing the services, and use CANSAS conversations, Individual Recovery Plans and a recovery group program, as well as working collaboratively with clinical staff from Western NSW Local Health District to ensure a solid foundation for each person’s recovery journey.

Once a person returns to their community they receive a clinical follow up after 7 days (WNSWLHD) and a recovery-based follow up at 28 days from Flourish Australia staff.

Thanks also to Jenny Craig



Occupational Therapy

If you are a people person who wants to make a difference in people's lives, perhaps you might consider working as an Occupational Therapist!

By Amy Vandervegt, OT

I didn't know what Occupational Therapy (OT) was until my very last months of High School. Originally, I wanted to be a Primary School Teacher. I wanted to do something that made a difference to people's lives, was different every day, and did not have me stuck at a desk. My Dad sustained a back injury when I was 5 months old, and I remember going with him to his Physiotherapy sessions as part of his ongoing treatment. My Mum told me that Dad also received OT very early on, and recommended this as something to study at university. I decided I would give it a go which turned out to be a good choice!

OT is such a broad and varied career. We work with individuals from all population groups, who have many different kinds of disabilities and needs. It is very

holistic, incorporating both mind and body. It is also very person-centred in that it involves getting to know people, understanding what their needs, strengths and interests are, and looking at how they interact in their natural environments. I studied the four-year degree at Southern Cross University on the Gold Coast. I also did six months of primary education in between, but decided to stick with OT.

I have been able to use my qualifications to get a few different jobs. My first job was working at Community Mental Health, although this was a Case Management role and did not utilise my OT-specific skills. I then worked as an OT in an Early Childhood Intervention Centre. This involved working with young children from zero to eight years with a variety of disabilities includ-

ing physical, intellectual, sensory and/or developmental delays. My current role is working with Flourish Australia as an OT at the Dubbo and Bathurst Sub-Acute Mental Health Units, taking turns to cover each unit week-about.

“Occupational Therapists ask ‘What matters to you?’ not ‘What’s the matter with you?’”
-Ginny Stoffel (AOTA President)

One of the main components of OT is assessing a person's day-to-day functioning and exploring different skills or strategies that a person could use for them to be as independent as possible. As an example, if a person has experienced a stroke that has resulted in weakness down one side of the body, an OT could explore different ways to do day-to-day tasks such as cooking or hanging out washing that requires the use of both arms. Another main component of OT is determining a person's sensory preferences.

In my current role, I invite people who access the service to explore my sensory kit which includes things like blankets, heat packs, scented candles, slimy goo, and other items that stimulate certain senses. This gives people the opportuni-

ty to identify what items make them feel calm or alert, which can help in regulating their emotions, and changing their mood in a helpful way.

Strengths

OTs are trained to be strengths-based. We look at what the person CAN do. We do this by getting to know the person through conversation as well as observation. For example, we might observe a person doing an everyday task, such as cooking, and use this to not only identify any areas of improvement, but also hone in on what they are good at. Sometimes we have to help people find alternative ways of doing things. Sometimes we even need to find alternatives to those alternatives! There is a lot of scope for creativity in OT, which involves a lot of thinking outside the box! In the end, of course, all we do is recommend things to people for them to take on board if they wish.

OT in Mental Health

In the Sub-Acute Units, we have an OT group that look at the four domains of daily activities: Self-Care, Rest, Leisure and Productivity. This group looks at how to find a balance between these domains, as this is very important in maintaining our physical and mental health. The group also highlights that, the activities we choose to do, need to be meaningful and important to us.

One of the issues that we see quite frequently for people accessing the service is poor coping skills. This might be in the form of substance abuse, self-harming, or other impulsive behaviours. Sometimes this is due to people not fully understanding their emotions, including why they feel the way they do, and how to appropriately express these emotions. It is important to find more appropriate ways of coping with stress and strong emotions. Sleep is also often a big problem for people experiencing a decline in their mental health. So many people have poor quality sleep so we also run groups on sleep hygiene, and hold evening mediation or relaxation sessions before bed.

I really love the work that I do, and enjoy seeing the difference that OT can make in improving a person's quality of life.

Thanks also to Sheree Masling and Jenny Craig

Putting wings to her dreams

Nancy's support planning journey

By Konnie Magalhaes

Nancy has been working with Flourish Australia for over a decade. She works very hard and is very passionate about her job and it keeps her well.

She has also been working on herself, too, in detail. She is aware of the challenges that she must deal with to keep physically and mentally well.

Nancy wished to further her professional development and find work that is more meaningful for her. That is why she decided to engage in "support planning."

As a support planner in Flourish Australia's Community Businesses, my role was to work alongside employees to support them in identifying pathways to their employment and other goals.

Nancy wished to combine her experience in catering at Figtree Conference Centre with her passion for the Cafe Experience which she enjoys so much. Nancy and her husband go to their local coffee shop where she winds down and just enjoys the moment.

She says, though, "I would like to work in

an area where I can contribute to other people's experience." So in the journey of supporting Nancy to fulfil her dream, we identified the goal of becoming a Barista in a coffee shop.

The journey to this goal will not be made without effort. There are many things to consider.

You might even consider some of these things as "barriers", a term often used in the employment field. Nevertheless, Nancy acknowledges their existence in her attempt to succeed!

"Nancy is a trooper...she happily paid for the course out of her own pocket."

And Nancy is a trooper when it comes to following her passions. Although she has lived experience of mental health issues, the main issue that presented itself was the challenge of developing her memory.

To start off, Nancy decided to go off to coffee training school. She happily paid

for the course out of her own pocket.

Then I went in search of someone who would serve as a guiding mentor to support Nancy during the classes, by taking notes for her among other things. We found an amazing mentor who could address any questions she would have about aspects of the course that were not clear. The mentor, a skilled barista herself, would also help her to master these skills.

She would also provide Nancy support in revising the materials, continuing to mentor her after the course had finished.

Soon Nancy wanted to expand her goals to address travel training and baking classes!

There was not just one option that was viable for the future, but two! Nancy could work in a coffee shop as a barista, or she could bake for a small bakery or even and more exciting work hard for very long and become a small business owner and bake small orders for little events and little bakeries.

We then found another worker who is a chef, savvy in the culinary arts, marketing and business. In getting to this stage, everything seemed just a dream...but then Nancy went to the training, did the hard work and all the homework, and is now about to start her baking classes.

Achieving dreams requires much effort, and a bit of support and guidance. Nancy is very happy and fully active and engaged in reaching her own dreams.

We are also lucky enough to have been able to find someone who is willing to help and support people who are vulnerable to have a better life. Someone like Raphael who is the café owner at Paddington Saturday Market who has a heart to help disadvantaged people including the homeless, orphans, and people who are vulnerable.

When I contacted Raphael and shared the story of Nancy's goals, dreams and also her challenges, Raphael was willing to help out. He did this by allowing Nancy to gain work experience at his café on Saturday. So Nancy will have a support worker to work alongside her while she is gaining real work experience outside of Flourish Australia at the Paddington Saturday Market café!

Work

...is one of the best things for mental health recovery.

- Work provides financial security and improves your lifestyle
- Work contributes to your sense of meaning, purpose and self esteem
- Work puts you into contact with potential friends and supporters

Flourish Australia's specialised Disability Employment Services can support you in your employment and recovery



Employment Panorama

More New Specialised Disability Employment Services from Flourish Australia

Flourish Australia is now providing mental health specialised Disability Employment Services (DES) across Sydney and the Hunter region of NSW. Flourish Australia's DES provision has

expanded dramatically to include nine more DES sites.

The DES program supports people with a lived experience of mental health issues to find and retain a job on the open employment market. As with all Flourish Australia's services, our DES is specialised in mental health so our employment consultants understand the unique challenges of accessing employment for people with a lived experience. To find out more simply call:

02 9393 9000

Or you can email us on

des@flourishaustralia.org.au

Families and Carers Room

The Family and Carer's Room was officially opened as part of Mental Health Month celebrations. It is located at the Sub Acute Unit which Flourish Australia runs in partnership with the local health district at Bathurst, known by the extremely popular name 'Panorama.'

From left to right Karen Nicholson (Mental Health Worker), Jenny Craig (Senior Cluster Manager) Sheree Masling (See P 50) Andrew O'Brien (General Manager, Operations), Amy Vandervegt (See p 51), Louise Doyle (Peer Worker) and Tom Murphy (Mental Health Worker). Staff not pictured are Jessie, Emily, Lachlan, Amy, Rachel, Colleen, Georgia. That massive cake, by the way, was only \$66 from Woolworths. More about Mental Health Month on pp 18 and 46.



Employment Panorama



If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life

By Grant J Everett

It may have taken a million words, but a small publisher in Katoomba has agreed to publish my science-fiction comedy novel *Scum of the Universe*. Black Cockie Press have provided editing and cover design services at no charge, and will take care of all those things I'm not very good at: marketing, promotions, lining up interviews and reviews...pretty much everything besides writing the book. Like any reputable publisher, they will only make money if I make money.

But this milestone didn't happen straight away: it took nine novels spread over thirteen years of hard work.

While I've dreamed of being a published author for most of my life, I've hit a lot of speed bumps along the way. This is normal, because just like musicians, artists, athletes and actors, finding success as a fiction author is very rare. Generally, a handful will do quite well, and

the other 99% rely on day jobs to keep food on the table. So as appealing as it sounds to devote all my time to cranking out books like a fiction dispensing machine, I don't fancy living on two-minute noodles while I wait for a big break that may never come. This is why I'm glad to be writing about your recovery stories in Panorama, as it allows me to earn a living wage while honing my skills. The downside of full-time employment is that I'm rarely in the right frame of mind to work on my manuscript when I come home, leaving Saturday as the only day of the week where I have the right head-space to put words onto paper.

A little-known-fact about writing novels is that authoring a manuscript is the easiest part to accomplish, with every following step getting more and more difficult. I've faced around 50 polite form rejection letters from almost every agent and publisher out there (not counting the ones who simply ignored my submissions), lost a lot of money to the empty promises of vanity presses, and my own doubts have caused many anxious, sleepless nights.

Oversaturation is another major issue for us would-be authors, because successes like Harry Potter, The Da Vinci Code, Twilight, The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo and so on and so on have planted

dreams of mega-super literary stardom into the heads of a millions of people. As a result, every publisher is flooded with half-baked manuscripts, making it even harder than it used to be to see the gems shining out from the mud.

Admittedly, some hiccups have been my fault, such as choosing science fiction comedy as my genre. Unless you count the golden years in the 1980s when *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Red Dwarf* were mainstream sensations, it's not the most marketable of styles. Despite this, I continue to write stories that I'd personally want to read, rather than selling out to what's in vogue for the next five minutes.

The mark of a true writer is that they NEED to write. If I was writing books purely for financial reasons, I would have given up ages ago. I've always spent large parts of the day creating little worlds in my head, which didn't do me any favours when my trigonometry homework was overdue. During any quiet, calm time, whether I'm traveling to work on the train or halfway asleep, I'm usually having conversations between my characters, choreographing action scenes, or tying together plot points. If I don't put these ideas down on paper, they'll just continue swirling around my head. This might sound frustrating, but once I open that Word file (which can be far more difficult than it sounds), it's cathartic, exciting, satisfying, mentally stimulating and infuriating all at once, and I can't see myself ever giving it away.

After a lifetime of being put through the wringer of the mental health system, I've discovered that it's very important to remember that a lack of success doesn't imply you haven't put in enough effort or don't have the sufficient skills or talent, and the only time failure becomes guaranteed is if you decide to give up. After charting my own (sometimes slow) progress in the pages of Panorama, I'm aware that there's no guarantee my novel will sell a single copy, let alone be a big success. It could be a total failure. But I can't let my worries stop me from reaching for my dreams, can I?

Scum of the Universe by Grant J Everett was released on SmashWords in October. You can get it here:

www.smashwords.com/books/view/898415

Pharmacist

By Warren Heggarty

“I love being a pharmacist because it involves doing things that I am good at and enjoy. These include explaining how people are to use medicines, organising medication packs and scripts and accurately entering information into dispensing programs. Don't do pharmacy for the money or because other people want you to do it. Pursue what you love and are good at instead.”



Cheryl Tang , Pharmacist

Pharmacists (also known as chemists) dispense medicines and advise people on their correct use. Originally, pharmacists would even manufacture some medicines in their shops, but nowadays practically everything is pre-packaged. The two main types of medicines are those requiring a doctors' prescription and “over the counter” medicines which do not. Pharmacists can advise patients about both types.

Community Pharmacists – what we usually think of when we think of Pharmacists - work in shops and have a lot of contact with the public as well as health care professionals. As well as dispensing prescription medicines, they also provide primary health care advice as well as supporting and educating customers on health promotion, disease prevention and the proper use of medicines.

Pharmacists also work in hospitals, for government and in industry. You need to complete a degree in pharmacy at university. HSC subjects that will help you gain entry to the course are Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Cheryl Tang, who accesses Flourish Australia's Buckingham House, is a pharmacist. She says that you can expect to do a police check and have vaccinations as part of the qualification process.

‘The options for the degree would be either 4 years Bachelors or 2 years Mas-

Employment Panorama

ters’ says Cheryl.

Pharmacologists are more involved in research and may require a degree in biomedical science, medical science, pharmaceutical science or a degree with a major in pharmacology.

Pharmacists have to be registered through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). To gain full registration, pharmacy graduates must successfully record 1,824 hours of supervised practice.

‘The Intern Training Program [ITP] needs to be undertaken whilst doing supervised practice, either run by the University of Sydney, The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia or by the Pharmacy Guild’ says Cheryl.

‘A written exam and an oral exam set by The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency also need to be attempted after checkpoints in the number of hours have been passed. Those checkpoints are 30% for written and 75% for oral.’

Trusted

Pharmacist is one of the more trusted professions. The duties of a pharmacist allow for quite a lot of meaningful interaction with patients and customers, although the more routine transactions are often handled by a pharmacy assistant.

Some pharmacy assistants are part timers who are still at school, however many pharmacists are looking for people

who have experience in sales or in dealing with customers. There is obviously a lot you can learn by taking on such a role.

What are the personal qualities that would make you a success as a pharmacist?

- Being able correctly to interpret doctors' prescriptions
- Detail oriented
- A good memory - you need to have a grasp of drug nomenclature, side effects and interactions
- Business oriented (especially if managing your own private retail pharmacy)
- Able to be a “front-line” educator in the field of health, keeping abreast of new developments
- Kind, patient and empathetic - people often visit pharmacists after receiving bad news...think about it (Tuten, 2011)

For further information...

Pharmacy Board of Australia 1300 419 495, www.pharmacyboard.gov.au

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia 02 6283 4777 www.psa.org.au

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia 03 9486 0177 www.shpa.org.au

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Additional Reporting Grant J Everett



How to get seasonal work in hospitality



By Deonny Zaroual

I've worked at the showground before so they know me, but working at the Invictus games turned out to be very special (see our other story on the games on pages 20 and 21).

I made an enquiry in person at the Royal Agricultural Society showground office where they told me to go online and look at the SEEK job service. They hire a LOT of people there for various seasonal work, both paid and volunteer. Every time there is a big event or function, they advertise. So I put my name down for the Invictus Games in a paid role.

Before I did that, though, I had to have not only my up-to-date resume, but also a police check. With some jobs you need a working with children check. I am lucky that because I work with Figtree Conference Centre, Tim Fong the General Manager of Human Resources for Flourish Australia was able to help me out there.

Each day started at 5AM and ran through until 3PM, ten hour shifts. First thing, I'd go in and meet the duty manager then go through the security screening. You wouldn't believe what was involved in that!

We had to go through four security doors, through a body scan including a hand held scanner, then there were the Police sniffer dogs! Before we could go in, we had to wait until the Police and the dogs did a sweep through. They checked EVERYWHERE!

My job was being in charge of a buffet which stretched from one end of the dome to the other. It was massive. There were 16 hot dishes, plus cold meats and salads. I had to liaise with the various chefs. There were four or five in the morning, then eight to ten chefs for lunch.

You might know that chefs have a reputation for being a bit rude. That's one of the bad things about hospitality! I always have to deal with a bit of anxiety around rude chefs. Well, it didn't surprise me we had a few problems at the beginning, but early on, the supervisor left and I became the supervisor in their place! I got the OK from the food and beverage manager to run my own show.

Someone had to take charge. I had to organise the buffet staff and liaise with the chefs to keep the food topped up. So I said to the chefs, look, this is our area and that is your area. We'll stay out of

ABOVE: Experience has taught Deonny how to deal with unfamiliar situations like the ones she came across at the Invictus Games. PHOTO NEIL FENELON

your area and you stay out of our area. That way we won't keep getting in one another's hair.

Once we sorted that out, things settled down!

Another challenge was communicating with eight staff that I was responsible for. It's a difficult thing to do when you have never met them before, you don't know people's names or how and where they have worked. You have to rely a bit on trial and error.

By watching how people worked I was able to move the more energetic ones into the roles requiring a bit more energy. The others I moved into areas that weren't so crucial!

The work side of this role turned out to be the easier side. I had not realised it would be such an emotional period working there. That side of the story I'll tell you in the article on the Invictus Games.



Community Businesses



We support the NDIS

PROFESSIONAL MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Flourish Australia's community businesses provide quality maintenance services with a smile. Including:



Grounds Maintenance



Cleaning Services



Prestige Packing



Business Services

Flourish Australia is a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provider. We can provide NDIS recipients with lawn mowing, garden maintenance and domestic cleaning services.

SERVICES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Flourish Australia supports people living with a mental health issue to access employment. We provide comprehensive workplace training to all community business employees, along with the option of completing work-related TAFE qualifications onsite. This means highly professional services at a very competitive price!

Contact us for a FREE quote: Phone: 1300 939 300 Email: darren.field@flourishaustralia.org.au

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Dress for Success

By Annie Sykes

It's a fact of life that we need to have the right clothes to suit the occasion. For example, job interviews. Some people don't think it matters, but it usually *does* matter to the people you're trying to impress. The problem is, it can be expensive when you are on a pension or even NewStart.

Knowing my financial circumstances that's why my mental health team introduced me to Dress for Success. I must admit I was surprised when they put it to me, but now that I look back on it, Dress for Success helped me one-on-one through a process that otherwise might have been very overwhelming.

They are a social enterprise run and staffed by women who work with women to help them choose outfits that show them at their best.

I made an appointment at their Marrickville outlet. One of their staff was assigned to work with me to help me look my best for an official gathering I was going to in Canberra. It was actually the launch of the book *Peer Work in Australia*, which was jointly produced by Flourish Australia and Mind. This launch, which was to be attended by the federal health minister, marked such an important milestone in recovery-based mental health that I simply had to look my best! Although there were a number of clients there at the same time, we all work one-on-one with a staff member and have our own private dressing room!

DFSS

Dress for Success Sydney is a registered charity that improves the employability of women in need in NSW by providing, free of charge, professional clothing, a network of support and the career development tools to help women achieve self-sufficiency.

1800 773 456

<https://sydney.dressforsuccess.org/>
132 Marrickville Road, Marrickville,
NSW 2204



After I discussed exactly what I was looking for, the lady went out the back to a very big room which was full of zillions of clothes. She selected items for three or four outfits including shoes, bling and scarves (it gets pretty chilly down in Canberra, you know!). So they do a very complete job and you are there for as long as it takes for you to be matched with suitable clothing. Everyone also gets a free toiletries pack to take with them.

In fact, the whole process and all the clothes are free! All you need to bring with you, perhaps, is a bit of patience to make the right decision. You can dress up as smartly as you need!

Not only do they help you with clothing, accessories and makeup, but they also do interview training workshops!

I was really amazed and I have to say I got a perfectly ironed, brand new shirt to go to Canberra in. The people at Dress for Success make it possible in every way.

Yes, you need to dress up!

Besides job interviews, here are some of the reasons you should think about getting yourself a nice outfit (apart from the fact that you deserve to look good on your recovery journey)...

A Graduation Ceremony: Not just your own, but perhaps for your daughter or your friend?

Funerals: We hope you don't need it for this purpose, but just in case, you will be ready.

Dates: Think of how much more confident you will be.

Weddings, parties, shows

Or just because you like to look nice!



Do 3 simple things to get a glowing reference from your boss



By Warren Heggarty

Scott Pape, the author of 'The Barefoot Investor' says that getting qualifications is not the key to sustainable employment. To be successful, you need to develop a reputation as a hard worker. What boss does not like a hard worker? (Pape, 2018, p. 189)

All workplaces (with the possible exception of Flourish Australia, ahem) contain their share of slackers, shirkers and whiners. Apparently 70% of Australian workers are 'ambivalent or completely disengaged from their jobs.' That's GREAT, because it makes it simple to develop that reputation as a hard worker.

All workplaces have boring repetitive tasks, hierarchies and rules. A lot of people see such jobs as somehow 'beneath them' and tell themselves 'I'll work hard when I get a good job.' To the boss, however, 'how you do any job is how you do EVERY job.'

Three habits

According to Scott Pape there are three habits that will help you earn a glowing reference from your boss. These three habits will get you a reputation for being a good worker. (Pape, 2018, p. 190) Doing the opposite of these habits is not a good idea.

- Be on time
- Get the job done, even when the boss is not around
- Be polite

Once you have EARNED the glowing reference, you then need politely to ASK the boss for it. If you don't ask for the

reference, how will the boss know you need it? (Pape, 2018, p. 191)

How to be on time

Panorama went round the office one morning and asked some workers (most of whom start work very early) how they manage to be on time. Surprisingly, alarm clocks play very little role. The common theme is getting into a habit and sticking to it.

Jasmin says she has been an early riser all her life and that makes it very difficult to be late for work. This life-long habit has evolved into a personal disposition. 'I don't LIKE to be late for anything. Punctuality is very important for me.'

Rochelle suggests that preparing the night before will help you get in on time. Lin, whose work involves salary payments says that her job is just so important that she cannot sleep in!

Marina has a new baby, so we asked her if that helped. 'For sure, having a baby helps you get up really early, but I don't know whether that helps you get to work on time because you need to change nappies and feed the baby.'

Grant M. says he always gets up with the sun. 'It's not easy to be late for work when you get up with the sun. And as a spin off, I think getting up with the sun is good for your mental health!' 'Living close to work, helps' says Doris, 'and travelling to and from work outside of peak hour.'

How to get the job done

Brian Tracy in 'Eat that Frog' claims that

only two per cent of people can work entirely without supervision. However, many people can't get the job done even WITH supervision. That's great, because it will be easy to outshine them simply by getting the job done, even when the boss is not there. Set standards for yourself that are higher than the 'standards' other people are setting for themselves. Even better, set yourself a standard that is a little higher than the boss's, if you can. (Tracy, 2004, p. 72) If you are truly in one of those boring, repetitive jobs people hate, doing this will be easy.

A word of warning here: don't mistake activity for achievement. (Tracy, 2004, p. 3)

Whatever the job is, you need to know what the priorities are and then complete the tasks in priority order. Consider the consequences of not doing a task. If they are dire, it is a high priority. Let's just say your boss is very keen on you finishing task X, but doesn't think tasks Y or Z are nearly so important. If you were to ignore the Xs but labour long and hard on lots of Ys and Zs (because they are easier or more fun), then you are not making the best use of your time, or the money the boss is paying you.

The Pareto principle says that you get 80 per cent of value out of 20 per cent of tasks. So if you do those 'top 20 per cent' tasks FIRST, adamantly refusing to touch those bottom 80 per cent tasks, your boss will see you as a champion. (Tracy, 2004, p. 21)

Why be polite?

Politeness shows other people that you care about them, and that makes it more likely that they will care about you! Etiquette helps us avoid unproductive arguments or misunderstandings, so workplace politeness is essential. It is especially important to be polite when meeting a new colleague or boss for the first time, because first impressions often set the tone for the whole subsequent relationship. Remaining polite helps maintain that good first impression. It also helps you NETWORK which is an important way to find a job in the first place! (Hamel)

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Community
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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:
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To find out more or to APPLY: Phone: 02 9393 9000 Email: clare.evans@flourishaustralia.org.au

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