



KEEPING PACE

August 2017

Welcome to the August 2017 edition of Keeping PACE.

We received some good news in PACE recently when we were informed that our funding was extended for another six months. This means we can continue to support our clients until the end of the year. There had been some uncertainty about whether the funding would continue, so it's a huge relief for our clients to know that support will still be there if they need it.

Over the last few months we have seen some changes in the mental health sector, with many services transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This means that over the next year or so they will no longer receive Government funding, and will have to provide services through the NDIS. This is a major change in the way mental health services are provided, and will have a significant impact on clients and workers. In PACE we have already seen the impact of the changes, with the uncertainty of the situation creating a great deal of anxiety for many of our clients. We can't do anything about the situation, but we will support our clients through this difficult time and help them manage the uncertainty.

Over the last couple of months PACE has been involved in delivering several programs for young people. We collaborated with headspace Port Adelaide to deliver "Stress Less", a four session program which provides young people with information and strategies to help them manage anxiety and depression. We also continued to deliver the "be BOLD – Break the Mould" positive body image and self-esteem program in high schools, and started two new anxiety programs at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre. These type of programs are important because they encourage people to think about mental health at a young age, and practice strategies which will help them achieve positive mental health throughout their lives.

Until next time, look after yourself.

Shane

Team Leader, PACE

PACE Service

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Screen time linked to negative self-image in teens

A recent study by the University of Newcastle showed that recreational screen time was associated with negative self-image in teenagers. The study showed that teenagers who spent a lot of time on their mobile phones and tablets looking at social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat judged their appearance more harshly than teenagers who spent less time on these sites. Social media encourages comparison, but most of the photos posted on social media aren't realistic, they are manipulated to show people at their best. The more people compare themselves to the unrealistic images they see on social media, the more negatively they see themselves. The research highlights the importance of limiting the amount of time teenagers spend on social media, and encouraging them to be critical of the images they see there. An article about the study by PsyPost can be viewed at:

<http://www.psypost.org/2017/08/study-recreational-screen-time-linked-worse-mental-health-teens-49470>



Love Your Body Week is about celebrating body confidence. Body image concerns present a huge problem for both males and females across Australia. Research indicates that poor body image can play a significant role in the development of eating disorders, as it can often lead to risky dieting and exercise behaviours. Love Your Body Week encourages people to stop focusing on appearance, and start accepting their body as it is. For more information visit:

<https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/support-us/love-your-body-week/>



R U OK? aims to inspire all Australians to help reduce our suicide rate by reaching out and making contact with others. More than 2,100 Australians suicide each year. For each person that dies in this way, it's estimated another 30 attempt to end their life. Connect with friends, co-workers and family in your life on September 14 and ask, "Are you ok?". For more information about R U OK? Day and how to start a conversation visit the R U OK? website:

<https://www.ruok.org.au/>

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Smoking and stress relief

There is much debate about the effect of smoking cigarettes on stress. Scientific research shows that the chemicals in cigarettes increase stress, yet many smokers are adamant that smoking cigarettes helps them to reduce their stress. So who is right? Does smoking increase or reduce stress? It may sound odd, but the answer is both.

If you search the internet you will find a seemingly endless amount of information opposing the view that smoking reduces stress. There are thousands of scientists, doctors and other experts (and non-experts) who adamantly state that *smoking does not reduce stress*. They cite scientific evidence, which proves that the chemicals in cigarettes actually increase stress on the human body. The evidence is clear and cannot be disputed, yet many smokers report that smoking a cigarette helps to calm them down when they are stressed. They have no doubt that smoking helps reduce their stress. So why is this so?

Some people believe that smoking reduces stress through a placebo effect. They argue that smokers convince themselves that smoking cigarettes reduces their stress, so when they have a cigarette they feel less stressed. There is no doubt that the mind is extremely powerful and can create a placebo effect, and this may partly explain the situation, but there is a more simple explanation of how smoking reduces stress – breathing.

When a person smokes a cigarette to manage their stress they are actually deep breathing. They take a deep breath in, hold it for a few seconds, then breathe out again, and they repeat this several times until the cigarette is finished. This is exactly the same as a deep breathing exercise, which is commonly recommended for relieving stress. Although the chemicals in cigarettes increase stress in the body, the act of smoking, which is actually deep breathing, reduces stress. Overall, stress is reduced because the effects of the deep breathing are more powerful than the effects of the chemicals. So those smokers who argue that smoking reduces their stress are right. Smoking does reduce stress, but it is actually the deep breathing that does it, not the cigarette.

If you want to quit smoking, but worry about how you will cope with the stress, remember that it isn't cigarettes that reduce stress, but the deep breathing involved in the act of smoking. You can continue to manage stress without cigarettes. All you need to do is go through the ritual of smoking without the cigarette. Step outside for a few minutes and breathe slowly and deeply. Using an e-cigarette can help to make the ritual feel the same. One of the reasons why smoking is such a difficult habit to break is that most people don't just discard the cigarettes, they discard the whole ritual, so their stress increases. If you want to give up smoking and manage your stress, ditch the cigarettes but keep breathing.

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