

KEEPING PACE

February 2020



BREAKING FREE FROM ANXIETY PROGRAM

The largest part of our work in PACE involves running support groups for anxiety, OCD and eating disorders. Most of our groups are ongoing, but we also deliver short-term anxiety groups on request. Breaking Free From Anxiety is a four session group program which teaches people about anxiety and it's causes, strategies for managing physical symptoms, how to change unhelpful thinking patterns, and how to develop self-confidence. We can run the program for any service which has clients who are struggling with anxiety, such as mental health services, youth services, community centres, children's centres, employment services and domestic violence services. The program is offered free of charge, and we can deliver it anywhere in the metropolitan area. For more information or to book a program for your clients call us on 8303 6660 or email pace@centacare.org.au

Welcome to the latest edition of Keeping PACE.

I hope you enjoyed your Christmas and New Year, and if you had time off work, I hope you enjoyed your break.

I'm sad to announce that our longest serving team member, Di, recently left PACE. Di has worked in PACE since the program started in 2013, and she was instrumental in developing and delivering our hoarding programs. Di had a huge impact on the lives of many people, both clients and colleagues, and she will be missed. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Di for her contribution to the PACE Service and wish her all the best for the future.

Our Recovery Support Groups took a break for a few weeks over the school holidays, but they are back up and running again now. In 2020 we will be offering Panic and Anxiety groups at Morphett Vale, Seaton, Elizabeth and Gawler, and OCD, Eating Disorders and Binge Eating groups at Payneham. The groups are a great place to meet people experiencing similar issues, and learn practical strategies for dealing with those issues.

In 2020 PACE will be offering a new positive body image and self-esteem workshop. The 90 minute presentation is designed for girls in year 7, and will be delivered free of charge to schools in the metropolitan area. We will continue to offer the Be Bold Break the Mould program, which is delivered over three sessions, but the new workshop will be more suitable for schools who are unable to accommodate the longer program.

Until next time, look after yourself.

Shane

Team Leader, PACE

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National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

Friday 20 March 2020

March 20 is the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence. Bullying is a significant issue in Australia, especially online bullying, and we need to take the issue seriously, because it can have huge impact on a person's wellbeing. The effects of bullying can be long lasting, with many people experiencing anxiety and depression many years after bullying has ended. The campaign aims to increase awareness of the impact of bullying, and reduce its occurrence. It is targeted at schools and students, but as adults we have an important role to play in teaching young people about bullying, and role-modelling acceptable behaviour. For more information about the campaign and how to get involved visit the Bullying No Way website:

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>



CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

The Butterfly Foundation and Instagram Australia have created a campaign to celebrate positive body image in young Australians. Social media has a significant impact on the way people see themselves, and many young people develop a negative self-image when they compare themselves to the people they see on social media. It's normal to compare ourselves to other people, but comparing ourselves to the images we see on social media isn't fair, because most of the images are manipulated in some way. #thewholeme encourages people to avoid unhelpful comparisons, and to be their authentic self.

To get involved on Instagram: #thewholeme

For more information visit the Butterfly Foundation website:

<https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/support-us/the-whole-me/>

MENTAL HEALTH AND NDIS CONFERENCE IN ADELAIDE

The 3rd Annual Mental Health and NDIS conference will be held in Adelaide this March. The theme of this year's conference is "NDIS and Mental Health: A national conversation about what comes next". The peak body for psychosocial services in Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, is partnering with the Mental Health Coalition of SA to deliver the conference. Each state has its own learnings and takeaways from the national rollout of the NDIS. The conference is focused on looking towards the future within the current climate. Past conferences have unpacked what the NDIS rollout looked like and its impact on services, this year it will consider how mental health, primary care, social and community services can work together to make the NDIS work for people with mental illness. The conference will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre on the 30th and 31st of March. For more information visit:

<https://ndisnationalmentalhealthconference.com.au/>

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NOTABLE QUOTE

“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.” *Nelson Mandela*

I stumbled across this quote the other day and thought it was relevant for most people, but especially for those who struggle with anxiety. It's normal to make some choices based on fear. If there's a risk of being hurt in a certain situation, it makes sense to avoid that situation. For example, there is high risk of being hit by a car when crossing a busy road during peak hour traffic, so I choose to cross at the lights. This choice makes sense because it helps me avoid the risk of being hit by a car. The problem for people with anxiety is that their perception of risk isn't always accurate. They tend to overestimate the risk, or see danger in situations where there isn't any, and this causes them to make choices which can create problems and limit their experiences. For example, someone with social anxiety might fear speaking to people on the phone. If they have an issue with their power bill and they need to call the power company to sort it out, the fear might cause them to avoid making the call. The choice is based on fear, but there is no real risk of being hurt, and the choice to avoid making the call could create a bigger problem, like the power being disconnected. Making a choice based on fear is only helpful when there is a real risk of danger. If there is no real risk, the choice might just prevent us from doing something we want or need to do, and create more problems for us.

Many people with anxiety feel like they are controlled by it, and they don't have any choice when they feel anxious. In the example above, the person with anxiety might say that they COULDN'T make the call to the power company because the anxiety was too great. But this isn't actually correct. Anxiety doesn't control us. We always have a choice. We can't choose whether we experience anxiety or not, because this is an automatic response, but we can choose what we do when anxiety strikes. The person in the example above had a choice. They could have made the phone call, but they decided not to, because they knew that making the call would have caused anxiety, and they wanted to avoid this. It's natural to avoid situations that make us anxious, because anxiety can feel horrible, but avoidance doesn't help in the long-term. In the short-term it provides relief, but in the longer term it causes problems, like the power being disconnected. It also means you miss out on doing many of the things you want to do. It's difficult to have a rich and fulfilling life if your choices are based on fear.

The important thing to remember about anxiety is that it doesn't MAKE us do anything. We can choose what we do when we feel anxious. We can choose to give in to the fear, or we can choose to do the things we want and need to do in spite of the anxiety. It's not easy, because anxiety can feel horrible, but it is possible, and over time it gets easier. Making choices to avoid feeling anxious when there isn't any real risk of harm isn't helpful, because it causes us to miss out on many experiences in life, and creates bigger problems. So when you feel anxious, stop and think about whether there is a real risk of being hurt, and if there isn't, think about what's more important, feeling some short-term relief from the anxiety, or living a full and rewarding life. When anxiety strikes, you always have a choice. You can choose to give in to the fear, or you can choose to face it. It's up to you. So, as Nelson Mandela said, make choices that reflect your hopes, not your fears. Your life will be much better for it.

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