

KEEPING PACE

NOVEMBER 2020

UPDATE ABOUT PACE SUPPORT GROUPS

In response to the latest COVID outbreak, we have decided that all of our remaining group sessions for 2020 will be offered online via Zoom instead of face to face. We realise that this will be inconvenient for many people, but we think it is better to take a cautious approach when dealing with COVID. Individual appointments will be available to people who are unable to attend online groups. All of our support groups will take a break during school holidays, and then, assuming things go well, face to face groups will start up again in late January. Most of the PACE Team will be working through January, so support will be available during the school holidays. For more information about the exact start dates for 2021 you can visit the Recovery Groups page on our website:

<https://programs.centacare.org.au/pace/support-groups/>

Welcome to the latest edition of Keeping PACE.

I was almost finished writing this newsletter when I heard about the latest COVID-19 outbreak here in South Australia, and had to change it completely. I was going to say that things were getting back to normal after a challenging year, but things changed quickly, and things are far from normal now. Although it seems like the outbreak is under control, there is still a great deal of uncertainty about the situation, and many people are feeling anxious as a result. Hopefully things will stay on track over the next couple of weeks, and the restrictions will ease before Christmas.

Things have been extremely busy here in PACE over the last few months, which is understandable considering the year we've had. We've faced some huge challenges as a community, and services like ours have seen a significant increase in the number of people looking for support as they struggle to deal with these challenges. It can be difficult for some people to ask for help, so it's encouraging to know that people have been willing to ask for help when they need it.

I am extremely pleased to announce that Alyce has returned to PACE after spending a year on maternity leave. We missed her while she was away, and we are pleased to have her back.

This is the last newsletter for 2020, so I hope you all have a great Christmas and you are able to spend some time relaxing with the people you care about.

Until next time, look after yourself.

Shane

Team Leader, PACE

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS AND CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH EATING DISORDERS



Eating Disorders Families Australia offers an online support group for parents and carers of people with eating disorders. Eating Disorders Families Australia is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization run by carers with a lived experience of caring for someone with an eating disorder to support and advocate for other carers. Caring for someone with an eating disorder is extremely challenging, and it's important to get as much support as possible. The online support group is a place for carers to connect, learn, share and support each other. Meetings are held online via Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of every month from 7.30 – 9.00pm. For more information check out the Eating Disorders Families Australia website:

<https://edfa.org.au/parents-and-carer-support/eating-disorder-support-groups/>

INVITATION TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ABOUT NEW EATING DISORDER CHECKLIST

A team of researchers from Flinders University are seeking feedback about a checklist they developed to help people with eating disorders find a suitable therapist. They are looking for feedback from people with an eating disorder, family members involved in treatment, and treatment providers, who are willing to comment on a preliminary version of the checklist. Feedback will be used in the ongoing development of the checklist. The survey will ask people to provide demographic information, and then ask them to rate each item in the checklist for suitability. The online survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. For more information click on the following link:

https://programs.centacare.org.au/pace/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/StudyFlyerCHECKLIST.LINK_.pdf



CAN COFFEE MAKE ANXIETY WORSE?

Most of us enjoy a cup of coffee or two (or five), but for people with an anxiety disorder, a daily caffeine fix could be making their anxiety worse. Caffeine is a stimulant that can mimic or exacerbate anxiety symptoms in some people. In fact, some researchers actually use caffeine to generate panic in people when conducting studies into panic disorder. Now this doesn't mean that everyone who has an anxiety disorder needs to stop drinking coffee, because the effects of caffeine vary from person to person, and most people can have a coffee or two without a problem, but for some people, even a small amount of caffeine can increase anxiety. There is an article on the Huffpost Australia website which highlights the issue. It discusses the impact of caffeine on anxiety, how to know if caffeine is a problem for you, and what to do if it is. To access the article click on the following link:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/is-coffee-making-your-anxiety-worse-au_5fa3292ec5b6ce7d0e67b6e4?ncid=yhpf

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5 TIPS TO CREATE A POSITIVE HOLIDAY SEASON AND REDUCE ANXIETY

By Tanya J Peterson, MS, NCC, - *Anxiety-Schmanxiety*

These five tips are tips for your inner self. While things like making reasonably sized to-do lists, minimizing consumption of things like processed foods and alcohol, and being selective about how and with whom you choose to spend your time this season are, of course, incredibly valuable, the following tips help you connect with and nurture yourself to cultivate inner peace. This way, you reduce holiday anxiety and create a positive, peaceful experience from the inside out.

- 1. Identify your personal purpose and meaning.** Regardless of all the external stressors and situations beyond your control, this is *your* holiday as much as it is everyone else's. Spend some time in quiet reflection, pondering what the entire season means to you. Forget *how* you celebrate. Focus instead on *why* you do it. A sense of meaning can help you through anxiety-provoking times. To use philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's wise words, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."
- 2. Set an intention.** With your sense of meaning and purpose in mind, create an intention for yourself and your holiday season. How do you want to be during this time? What do you want the season to be like? Intentions are similar to goals, yet they often focus more on the feeling of the experience than on action steps to achieve something. Intentions drive goals, and with your intention in mind, you can decide on small but purposeful action steps to take every day in order to make your intention come alive moment by moment.
- 3. Choose a focus object.** Select a small object that represents your meaning and intention. It can be a trinket, a picture, a piece of paper with your intention written boldly on it—the possibilities for mindful focus objects are seemingly limitless. Carry it with you throughout the season as a visual reminder of what this time means to you. When you feel your anxiety and stress levels begin to rise, pause. Be present with your object and study it, taking in the details and reminding yourself of your greater purpose beyond the anxiety-inducing situation.
- 4. Practice non-judgmental noticing.** Rather than trying to fight your anxiety and push it away, be aware of it. Notice the signs in your body that alert you to stress, and catch yourself lost in racing, anxious thoughts. Remember, holiday anxiety is normal, so don't berate yourself for it. Rather than judging yourself or the situation you're experiencing, just acknowledge it and then become mindful. Shift your attention to the present moment so you're experiencing it fully rather than remaining trapped in your thoughts about it. If the moment is particularly stressful, use it as a great opportunity to use your focus object and re-center around your sense of meaning. Return to your intention over and over again without being upset with yourself for it.
- 5. Breathe.** When we're anxious and stressed, our breathing quickens and becomes shallow. This signals the brain that something bad is happening, and it intensifies the stress response. Sometimes, simply stepping aside (into fresh air if possible, but if not, that's okay) and breathing mindfully is enough to calm you so you can face what you must. Take several slow, deep breaths, and pull your attention away from your thoughts and emotions and onto the sound and feel of the air as it enters, fills, and leaves your body.

Actively engaging in these five steps repeatedly throughout the holiday season can noticeably reduce your holiday anxiety and replace it with peace and positivity. Doing them can reset your nervous system to calm your stress response quiet your soul so you can make a meaningful holiday no matter what it looks like this year.

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