

KEEPING PACE

FEBRUARY 2021

CHANGES FOR PACE GROUPS IN 2021

There will be a few changes to our support groups in 2021. Last year we offered one Eating Disorders Recovery Support Group, but this year we will offer two, a fortnightly online group via Zoom, and a monthly group at Payneham. We will continue to offer five support groups for people with anxiety, at Morphett Vale, Seaton Salisbury, Gawler and online, but they will have a new name: *STAR: Support Towards Anxiety Recovery*. We will continue to offer a support group for people with OCD at Payneham, but the group will now be called *HOPE: Help with OCD in a Peer-led Environment*. Our support group for people with binge eating issues will continue at Payneham, but the group will now be called *Breaking up with Bingeing*. For more information visit the Recovery Groups page on our website:

<https://programs.centacare.org.au/pace/>

Welcome to the latest edition of Keeping PACE.

It's hard to believe that we're in February already. It doesn't seem that long since I sent out the last newsletter, but that was three months ago.

We're only a few weeks into the new year and things are already busy here in PACE. We've all been busy seeing individual clients, and our Recovery Support Groups have started up again. For the last few weeks of 2020 we weren't able to offer face to face groups, but they are all up and running again now. In addition to our ongoing groups, we have also booked several other group programs, including two Breaking Free from Anxiety programs and a Be Bold Break the Mould positive body image and self-esteem program.

While most of our team took a few weeks off in January, Alex and Kym were in the office working on some new books for our groups. The new books will replace the ones we have been using in the groups for several years. We created the books to guide the discussions in the groups, and everyone who attends a group is given one to keep. They are filled with information and resources aimed at helping people in their recovery journey.

In March we will welcome a new face in PACE. Carolyn will be doing a student placement with us and she will be with us for a few months. I'm sure she will make a valuable contribution to our service and we are looking forward to having her in the team.

Until next time, look after yourself.

Shane

Team Leader, PACE

HOW TRAUMA FOCUSED PSYCHOTHERAPY WORKS FOR PEOPLE WITH PTSD

A study conducted by the University of Texas has provided a greater understanding of how trauma-focused psychotherapy works in helping people overcome the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Trauma-focused psychotherapy, which involves facing traumatic memories, and feared objects, situations and activities, has proven to be the most effective method of treating PTSD, but there hasn't been much data to show how it works. The study used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to identify communication between different parts of the brain before and after treatment. It showed that the treatment resulted in less communication between the areas of the brain associated with emotions and logical thinking. It is hoped that this new information will help researchers to develop new and better treatments for PTSD. To access the article click on the following link:



[Unlocking PTSD: New study reveals why trauma-focused psychotherapy treatment works – ScienceDaily](#)



DON'T TALK ABOUT DIETING IN FRONT OF YOUR KIDS

A recent article on ABC News online discusses the risks of talking about dieting in front of children. It discusses the link between dieting and eating disorders, and encourages parents to be more aware of the messages they give their children about dieting. Although dieting doesn't cause eating disorders, it can be a significant factor in the development of eating disorders in some people, so it's important that we don't say or do anything that will encourage our children to start dieting. Parents certainly aren't to blame for eating disorders, and there are many other factors involved, but the reality is that talking about dieting in front of children can normalise the behaviour and make them more likely to try it themselves, which can lead to disordered eating in some children, so it's important to avoid talking about it. Click on the following link to access the article:

[Stop talking about your dieting in front of children, experts warn, as eating disorders rise - ABC News](#)

NEW OCD TRIAL

QIMR Berghofer is starting a clinical trial of a new brain stimulation treatment for OCD. It involves targeting Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) to parts of the brain associated with OCD symptoms. TMS is a non-invasive procedure that delivers repetitive magnetic pulses to the brain to stimulate nerve cells and change brain activity. It's been used to treat depression successfully for a while, and researchers hope that it will be effective for OCD too. One positive aspect of the treatment is that it can be individualized for each patient. An MRI can be used to identify the areas of the brain that are involved in the OCD symptoms in each person, and treatment can be targeted to these areas. Medication and psychological therapies are effective for many people with OCD, but some people still experience severe symptoms, so new treatments are needed to make life easier for these people. The trial is being conducted at QIMR Berghofer's Brisbane clinic. For more information click on the following link:

[Queenslanders needed for OCD treatment clinical trial - QIMR Berghofer](#)

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Notable quote

“Anxiety was born in the very same moment as mankind. And since we will never be able to master it, we will have to learn to live with it.” Paulo Coelho

In PACE, we support many people with anxiety, and most of them say the same thing about their anxiety when asked about it – they hate it and they want to get rid of it. It’s understandable for people to think this way about anxiety, because at the very least, it’s uncomfortable, and at its worst, it can be debilitating, but the reality is that thinking about anxiety in this way can actually make it worse.

Anxiety is part of life, and whether we like it or not, it’s something we will have to learn to live with, but how we live with it depends a lot on our attitude to it. Research conducted by Assistant Professor Alia Crum from Stanford University has shown that viewing stress and anxiety as helpful rather than harmful is associated with better health, emotional wellbeing, and productivity. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly, the way we view anxiety determines how much anxiety we experience in general. If we have a negative view of anxiety, we can start worry about getting anxious. Our anxiety increases because we feel anxious about getting anxious. If we have a positive view of anxiety, this doesn’t happen. We don’t worry about getting anxious, so we don’t feel as anxious overall.

Secondly, the way we view anxiety determines how we respond when we feel anxious. When we view anxiety in a negative way, we will fight against it when it arises, which generally makes it worse. We are also more likely to use unhelpful coping strategies like avoidance, procrastination and self-medicating. However, if we view anxiety in a positive way, we will accept it rather than fight against it, which generally makes the anxiety lessen, and we will also use more helpful coping strategies, such as facing the situations that cause anxiety, and using problem solving techniques to deal with difficult situations.

Professor Clifton B Parker from Stanford University outlines three aspects to developing a positive view of anxiety:

1. Start to view anxiety as normal. Everyone experiences anxiety. It’s just part of being human.
2. Start to view anxiety as helpful, not harmful. Anxiety not only keeps us safe when we face danger, but it gives us energy to face challenges and deal with them effectively.
3. Start to view anxiety as an opportunity to learn, grow and develop resilience. Every time you face a situation that causes anxiety, you get better at dealing with it, and your confidence in your ability to cope with it grows.

Anxiety isn’t pleasant, but it’s not as bad as we often make it out to be, and if we continue to view it in a negative way, we will actually feel more anxious. However, if we can start to develop a positive view of anxiety, we will feel less anxious, and our physical and emotional health will be much better in general. Anxiety is normal, helpful and gives us an opportunity to develop resilience, so try to embrace it rather than fight against it. It’s not easy, but you will be better off in the long run if you do.

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