



FACES NEWSLETTER

Editorial – June 2019 Issue

In my role as the WA Carers Representative on the National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum, I have the privilege of meeting carers from around Australia. The one thing that I find consistent is a shared passion to improve the experience of consumers and carers. This extends beyond the carer and the consumer in their world, to others and the community at large.



I have learned how important it is to use your voice to create change and have observed how powerful influence can be.

Carers know that one day caring may feel very rewarding and the next day, not so. There are no hard and fast rules; everything shifts and changes. It can at times feel like you take one step forward, followed by several steps backwards, but persevere we do.

From my viewpoint, I feel that we are all on this journey together as a community. Our strength is our collective voice and our resolution to stay the course for our loved ones and our own sense of doing what is right.

I am committed to being your voice at the national level. As a Carer Consultant at North Metropolitan Health Service, I am part of a team of consultants who are also committed to being your voice. Please help us by informing us about what you believe would make a difference in terms of what we should be striving for to improve services and outcomes for you and the person you care for.

I welcome letters to the Editor that we can publish in this newsletter, as well as contributions to the content. Please email me, Hayley.solich@health.wa.gov.au.

In closing, a quote from a very courageous young woman, Malala Yousafzai:

"I speak not for myself but for those without voice... those who have fought for their rights... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity..."

Hayley | Carer Consultant
Stirling Community Clinic

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NMHS MH CARER SUPPORT SERVICES

Older Adult Carer Support Group

Lower West meets monthly at 6 Lemnos St, Shenton Park. The sessions are designed for carers of a person with mental illness or behavioural difficulties related to dementia, who reside in the Lower West. To attend, contact Lower West OAMHS Social Work Department or Carer Liaison and Education Service on 9328 0800.

Mirrabooka Carer Support Group

meets on the **3rd Tuesday** of every month, with one month focusing on 'educational-based' content, and the alternate month outings and support.

Osborne Park Carer Support Group

meets **3rd Thursday** of every month.

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital

Inpatient Unit Carer Support Group for carers of inpatients only. Access via social workers.

Osborne Park Hospital Community Clinic, Mirrabooka Community Clinic Carer, Joondalup Community Clinic Carer Peer Support Workers -

available upon request, ask the case manager.

Youth Hospital in the Home (HiTH)

Carer Support Available upon request, ask the social worker



Would you like to receive this newsletter in your inbox?
Or would you like to contribute an article, poem or story?
Contact: Hayley.solich@health.wa.gov.au.

Self-Care Tips

Phone a friend

by Hayley | Carer Consultant

Stirling Community Clinic

Have you heard of Protective Behaviours?

Protective Behaviours (PB) was a program where PB practitioners taught young children to help them to establish a safe network of people with whom they could share anything about their life.

The program supported that you need to have four people in your life that you could trust to tell anything to, even the bad things.

These four people need to be people who, if you told them something significantly bad, would be able to take action to help.

I think this principle may be helpful for us as adult carers. Too often we internalise events and emotions. Putting up with a lot of what could be considered 'abuse', we make allowances. And we may fail to communicate to others how we are feeling.

The truth is we need to be able to talk to someone about what is happening to us, especially if we feel threatened or it is negatively affecting our mental health.

I would encourage you to identify four people that you can trust and to make good use of them. Let someone know how you are going – perhaps your friend, GP, partner, counsellor, faith leader – because you matter too!

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Creative Expressions

I choose understanding

By Hayley | Carer Consultant

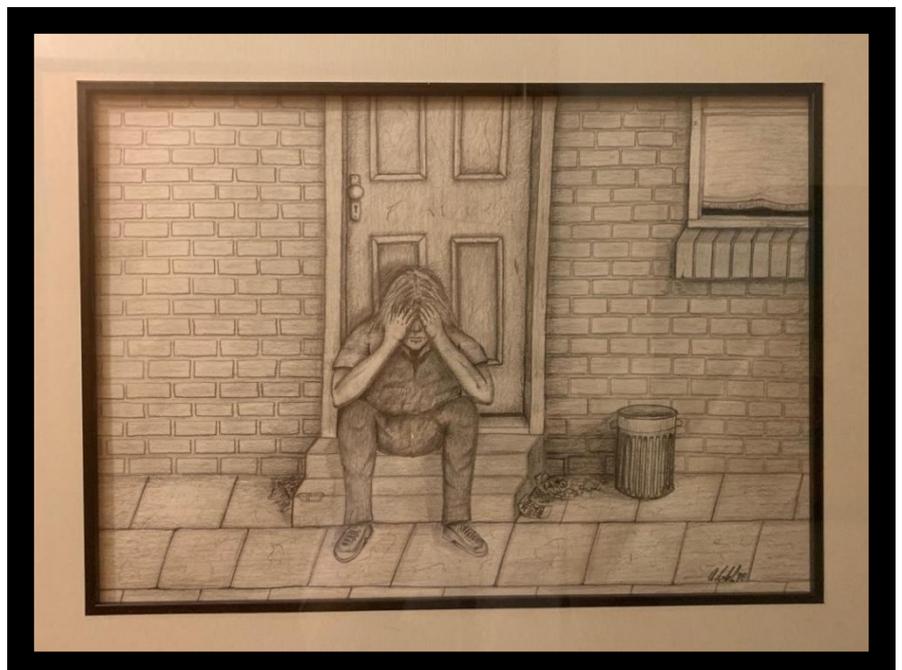
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When I look with my natural eyes,
all I see is a man in despair.
But when I look through a different lens,
I see a road of trauma travelled.
The man's despair is a bi-product of the
events he has experienced.
I can choose just to see his despair,
the things he does to try to cope;
and in doing so,
I can choose to reject him based on his behaviours.
Or I can choose to look deeper,
to seek out the truth about this man and his journey.
They say that the only way to really understand another
is to walk a day in his shoes,
yet I would not want to walk a minute in his,
enduring the agony he faces daily.
I will content myself simply to choose to understand
by asking him to share his perspective with me.
And in so doing, I free him to be who he is
and to find healing his way.
And it is through these choices that I can gain
a better understanding of the man.

He paid the price

by Andy | Consumer

Mirrabooka Community Clinic



Let's Talk About It

Individual Placement Support Program at Stirling

by Ruth | Community Development Officer
Stirling Community Clinic

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an employment program that is person-centred and strengths based, combining both mental health and employment support services in an evidence-based model. IPS has been adopted by Stirling catchment and is implemented in partnership with MAX Employment (a Disability Employment Services provider) at both Mirrabooka and Osborne Park clinics.

The program is reviewed annually and since its inception in the catchment, has received successful independent reviews of 'Good Standing'.

Internationally, where IPS programs have been implemented and successfully managed, employment outcomes for people with a lived experience of mental illness have been as high as 54 percent compared to traditional employment methods of just 24 per cent.

One Stirling catchment consumer who has benefited from IPS, shares his story of being unemployed for four years, experiencing severe impacts of schizophrenia on his life resulting in financial stress and social isolation. Through IPS he was able to work collaboratively with his case manager and employment specialist to identify his interests, strengths and future work opportunities.

All IPS employment placements take into careful consideration the specific requirements of a job that will best accommodate a persons lived experience of mental illness. MAX employment assisted this IPS participant to complete training certificates which resulted in him being a high achiever, and consequently, employed by the training provider. This consumer has gone on to retain his work for almost a year and has been able to experience stability in his mental health resulting in a discharge from mental health services. He notes "I am a lot more comfortable financially- I have started saving for a new reliable car. I am feeling more confident. I would like to thank IPS & MAX Employment for assisting me with finding and maintaining employment".

Other benefits beyond the financial gains IPS participants have experienced in Stirling catchment include increased self-worth and confidence, social inclusion within the workplace and ability to participate socially outside of work due to having greater confidence and financial capacity; for some this has resulted in family reunification.

NMHS Mental Health program offers their congratulations to Stirling catchment clinicians and employment specialists on their ability to work collaboratively to the benefit of consumers in this effective and unique initiative.

Latest News

Funding for another 12 Months

by Hayley | Carer Consultant
Stirling Community Clinic

Partners in Recovery (PIR) and the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (CRCCs) have both received funding for another 12 months to provide a smooth transition for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

PIR aims to better support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs and their carers and families, by getting multiple sectors, services and supports they may come into contact with (and could benefit from) to work in a more collaborative, coordinated, and integrated way.

CRCCs aim to contribute to the support and maintenance of caring relationships by facilitating access to information, respite care and other support appropriate to carers' needs and circumstances, and the needs of the people they care for.

CRCCs also provide free and confidential information on local carer support, disability and community services.

You can contact your local CRCCs on 1800 052 222 during business hours or 1800 059 059 for emergency respite support outside standard business hours (Free call from landlines only).

Carers Tips & Tools

Youth Suicide
by Nadine | Carer
Consultant
Adult Program
Executive



The statistics reflect youth suicide is increasing. Unfortunately, suicide has become a way of dealing with struggles or negative feelings consistent with the developing of, or presence of, mental illness. What begins as a thought can at times, or even all the time, present as the real and only option to the overwhelming distress or unbearable pain felt.

How do we provide support in a safe way to youth who may be considering suicide?

Beyond Blue recommends:

“Don’t be afraid to ask direct questions about suicide to the person or confront someone close to them. You can’t ‘put the idea of suicide’ in someone’s head by talking about it”.

Mental Health First Aid also agrees *it is okay to ask.*

If you find yourself or someone you know in a situation where you are able to assist a young person, here are some ways to ask if they are considering suicide or in a crisis situation and need immediate help:

- *"Are you feeling so bad that you're thinking about ending your life?"*
- *"Are you having thoughts about suicide?"*
- *"Do you ever wish you were dead?"*

Sometimes the release of admitting these thoughts can be a move forward.

Be available to listen and act if needed. The reality is we all try to do our best, be it parent, guardian, carer, family member, close friend and even work mate. Suicide is a permanent solution to what often is a temporary problem. Sometimes just being open and having the difficult conversation or checking in with each other can have a significant impact. The pain of the loss of a person to suicide is tragic for all concerned and no thoughts, words nor actions can ever bring the person back, so if possible, take the opportunity to speak up. And finally, ask the hard questions.

If you are talking to someone about suicide:

do	don't
<p>Let your friend or loved one know you have noticed they're behaving differently.</p> <p>If you feel uncertain and that your friend or loved one may be at risk, do ask the question. Are you having thoughts about suicide?</p> <p>Be prepared for the answer to be yes. Then listen with empathy and without judgement.</p> <p>Make sure they're safe for now and support them to seek help.</p>	<p>Don't try to talk them out of suicide by reminding them 'what they've got going for them' or 'how much it would hurt their friends and family'.</p> <p>Don't try to fix their problems.</p> <p>Don't dismiss it as 'attention seeking'. Take them seriously and acknowledge the reasons they want to die.</p>

#YouCanTalk
... about suicide

Let's Talk About It

MHERL

by Lisa | Carer Consultant
Lower West Community Clinic

Often we are told to ring MHERL. So who are they and what service do they provide?

MHERL is the Mental Health Emergency Response Line managed by the East Metropolitan Health Service.

Staffed by mental health professionals, this mental health call centre will provide an expert telephone response to acute mental health issues. They provide assessment, specialist intervention and support for people experiencing a mental health emergency. This free service is available 24 hours, 7 days a week and if the consumer is with a community clinic, they will link any information or concerns to the clinic the next business day.

MHERL is for anyone who feels they need urgent support in regards to a mental health crisis. This can be for:

- individuals
- families/carers
- members of the general public who witness a mental health crisis and needs assistance
- health Professionals
- community welfare service providers.

MHERL covers an area from Two Rocks in the north to Peel and Waroona in the south. Rural link will provide help for mental health emergencies in the regional areas of Western Australia.

It is recognised that family and friends play an important role in the life of a person who has become unwell, so for carers an expert at the end of the phone who will support and help them in a crisis is crucial. This service will provide an immediate response if needed or can help to navigate the system so the appropriate help is received.

Carer's Stories of using MHERL

- *My teenage daughter was having a severe anxiety episode and threatening to harm herself. Everything was escalating rapidly. I called MHERL and they were able to offer me advice on how to best manage the situation. I followed their advice and was able to help my daughter through the crisis without going to hospital.*
- *I was interstate on business and my son had an episode that was quite serious. I tried to call MHERL but realised that it is only accessible from within the state. In the end I had to call the Police and it was really hard on my family with me being away. I will know better for next time so I don't waste time and I will put a better safety plan in place to manage emergencies in my absence.*
- *It can be a bit hit and miss with MHERL, depending on who you get. I have sometimes been a bit disappointed with the response.*
- *When my young adult daughter was feeling suicidal, I contacted MHERL as I was not sure if I should take her into hospital or how to manage her depressed state and desire to self-harm. They triaged her over the phone, talking her through her suicidal thoughts and gave her advice on how to manage these. She appeared calmer and more settled after the call and thankfully, she didn't action her thoughts.*



MHERL – 1300 555 788
Peel – 1800 676 822
Rural Link – 1800 552 002



Latest News

NDIS

by Trudy | Carer Consultant
Adult Program Executive

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the new way of providing support to people with mental illness and their carers.

It is a person-centred support package tailored to the individual, with an application process that includes your General Practitioner (GP) and clinicians to determine the level of support required and the number of hours of service to be provided.

For those who already have a package:

On 12 December 2017, the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments agreed that WA would join the nationally delivered NDIS. Before this, Western Australia administered its own version of the NDIS. From 1 July 2018, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) took over responsibility for the delivery of the NDIS in Western Australia. The NDIS will continue to be implemented on a geographic basis by NDIA and will be fully rolled out across WA by 2020. All current participants in the WA NDIS are being transferred to the nationally delivered scheme.

See <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/wa-ndis/wa-ndis/> for more information.

For those who don't have a package:

If a person with mental illness is engaged in support services and has not yet applied for a package, now is the time to apply!

Organisations assisting Carers with more information, helpful tools and resources to prepare for an application are:

- Carers WA NDIS team 1300 227 377
<https://www.carerswa.asn.au/carers-wa-services/ndis-in-wa/>
- AVIVO 1300 428 486
<https://www.avivo.org.au/services/mentalhealth/>
- Commonwealth Carelink and Respite Centre 1300 885 886
<https://ilc.com.au/>
- Helping Minds on 9427 7100
<https://helpingminds.org.au/>
- Mental Illness Fellowship of WA on 92378900
<https://www.mifwa.org.au/>

The Mental Illness Fellowship of WA (MIFWA) hosted the very first trial for the NDIS, supporting people with their application and engagement with a preferred provider.

It is important to note that funding for Carer Support can be included in the application.

Showcasing Carer Support Services

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre
by Hayley | Carer Consultant
Stirling Community Clinic

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre provides a range of holistic services to women from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds.

Established in 1992 under the National women's health strategy, Ishar's clients are mainly women in the age group of 20-70, with low English language skills and generally receiving Centrelink benefits.

Each year Ishar services approximately 5000 women from over 80 ethnicities making over 30,000 service contacts.

Ishar's mission is to provide inclusive, holistic and culturally sensitive services for women and their families and promoting healthy communities.

The types of services Ishar currently provides are:

- **Women's Health Clinic**

Female GP and nurse providing reproductive health and antenatal clinic. Also provides Mental Health Care Plans for those referred to their Clinical Psychologist. Services are bulk-billed through Medicare.

- **Well Women's Checks** provided by the Practice Nurse to monitor general health, blood pressure, advice on contraceptives and unplanned pregnancies, cervical screens and Sexually Transmitted Infections screening.

- **Pregnancy & Perinatal Support Services** include antenatal shared care with hospital, individual consultations, childbirth, postnatal education and home visits after birth.

- **Dietitian Service** providing dietary and lifestyle advice by an Accredited practicing Dietitian.

- **Counselling Service: Sexual and Reproductive Health** offers free counselling services where women can discuss issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

- **Clinical Psychologist** for psychological therapy and counselling.

- **Domestic Violence Support Program** for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence.

- **Carer Support Program** for women providing unpaid care to people living with mental, physical and/or intellectual disability.

- **40+ Women's Lifestyle Program** includes a range of activities and information sessions, events and outings. Groups in Mirrabooka and Bentley

- **Settlement, Engagement and Transition Support** for newly arrived humanitarian refugees living in Australia for less than 5 years.

- **Exercise and Fitness Program** including exercise and yoga classes.

- **Family Support Program** for family health, settlement and welfare issues.

- **Fun being a Mum Group** for mothers with babies aged up to 12 months.

For more information, phone (08) 9345 5335 or visit Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services at <https://www.ishar.org.au/>

Ishar is located near Stirling Libraries in Mirrabooka, 21 Sudbury Road, Mirrabooka ([map](#)).





Promoting health and wellbeing at smoke-free sites

North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS) Mental Health services aim to decrease smoking to reduce exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. This is part of its commitment to the health and wellbeing of patients, staff and visitors as there is no safe level of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. All NMHS Mental Health sites will become smoke-free from 30 August 2019 and 'Smoking Care' will be provided for

smokers whilst they are within a smoke-free site.

A suite of evidence based activities will support this policy change, including:

- New Smoking Care Guidelines for clinicians so they can effectively address patient nicotine dependence in a supportive and evidence based manner.
- Training for staff, including medical officers, nurses and allied health on the new clinical guidelines.
- A one-stop online information hub for staff on caring for patients who smoke.
- Smoking support groups for patients who smoke.
- The trial of a Smokers Clinic at Graylands Hospital. This will provide the opportunity for patients who smoke to make an appointment to see a medical officer to discuss their smoking and receive treatment for their nicotine addiction.
- A range of activities to distract patients from smoking such as art or music therapy and exercise activities.

If you are a smoker visiting someone at a NMHS Mental Health site from August 30, please do not smoke on your visit and refrain from gifting cigarettes. You may like to try one of these gifts instead:

- craft activities;
- hand creams;
- stress balls;
- aromatherapy oils;
- mindfulness colouring-in books; or
- mints.

NMHS Mental Health welcomes the efforts of all contributors that are collectively working to "Support people to be Smoke Free."



Innovative Therapies **Equine-Assisted Therapy (E.A.T)**

by Kirsten | Carer Consultant
Adult Program Executive

Equine-Assisted Therapy (E.A.T.) is a treatment that uses horses to reach rehabilitative goals. It has positive results for those who are recovering from substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and other psychological issues. By engaging with horses, individuals can learn about themselves, their relationships and emotions, and skills essential to the recovery process.



E.A.T. uses horses as a reflective tool to raise awareness of how we present ourselves to others. Horses teach us to be aware of our nonverbal communication by mirroring our body language. An experienced facilitator will interpret the horse's movements and postures and relay this information back to the participant, who is often unaware of the silent signals they are sending.

No riding skills are necessary to participate in E.A.T. as the therapy is conducted on the ground. This fosters an equal relationship between humans and horses as the horse is not under the control of the human and can engage naturally and authentically.

Whilst large animals, horses are very vulnerable. As prey animals, horses are hypervigilant, constantly scanning their environment for potential danger. They're highly sensitive to their environment and changes in body language in other animals that can signal danger and trigger a fight/flight response. People who've experienced trauma or are living with PTSD are in a similar state. They can readily relate to the horse's fight/flight behaviours and can learn to identify, understand and manage their own emotional triggers.

There is now a mounting body of research validating the efficacy of horses in the treatment of stress and anxiety. Studies have shown that being close to horses slows our heart rate and lowers our blood pressure. Horses exude calmness and gentleness which we absorb during our interactions with them, yet it is the companionship that we develop with our equine partners that opens a doorway for learning, wellness and personal growth. Horses can help us identify and process our feelings and learn how to trust again.

As herd animals, horses crave companionship, require connection and are experts at establishing social structures.

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They rely on each other (strength in numbers) and will run to each other for safety. They teach us the importance of a support network, and that we are better with others than in isolation, especially in times of distress. They teach us that it's okay to reach out and ask for help.

Horses can also help develop our self-confidence; they need us to be the best version of ourselves. A timid horse will ask us to lead and needs us to be decisive and self-assured. A confident horse will test our leadership and ask us to be firm in our boundaries and clear in our communication. Setting boundaries and teaching people how to treat us are important social skills which foster trust and respect in our relationships. These are important lessons for people struggling with social anxieties or difficult relationships.

Emotional intelligence governs our interactions

with others. Survivors of abuse, of post-traumatic stress and people battling addictions are expert at avoiding or numbing their emotions and often have trouble identifying their feelings. Horses have a unique ability to sense emotions and react accordingly. If someone is angry or aggressive, the horse may become resistant. If the person is anxious or fearful, the horse may become still or skittish. The horse will respond to a person's emotion by mirroring with their own.

By learning to communicate effectively with a horse, we can learn to communicate effectively in our own interactions. The way people communicate with a horse is usually a reflection of how they communicate with people.

Through interacting with a horse, useful information can be gained about their communication style and how they engage with others. A participant will be encouraged to try changing their gestures or posture and will be instantly rewarded when the horse responds differently. It is a fulfilling and powerful learning experience.

Horses far outweigh and outsize us, yet will offer us the opportunity to lead them. Horses are instinctively fearful so to receive their trust and be accepted as their leader makes us feel special and gives us a purpose. When they choose to be with us and look to us for direction and security, it gives us a sense of connection and boosts our self-worth.

Horses are capable of teaching many valuable lessons to humans. They teach us to be genuine in our actions, clear in our communication, to forgive, to be non-judgemental and to trust again. They allow us to be who we truly are.



Other Carer Support Services

Helping Minds (08) 9427 7100
Carers WA 1300 227 377
MIFWA 9237 8900

Important Numbers

Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MEHRL)

1300 555 788

Rural Line

1800 552 022

For help with mental health emergencies

Crisis Care Help Line

1800 199 008

Help with temporary accommodation, protection for children, financial aid, counselling and other support services

Police

131 444

For police assistance or attendance: when any person feels in danger, under threat or at risk.

Triple 000 Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance)

For urgent help in a life-threatening emergencies

LifeLine

131 114

24/7 crisis support telephone counselling service.



Would you like to contribute an article, poem or story? Do you know a great service for carers? Let us know. Email FACES Editor, Hayley.solich@health.wa.gov.au