

# Rural Resilience

by Centacare NEW



Wee Waa, NSW





Centacare New England North West (NENW) was established in 2001, to extend counselling services to families and children of the Diocese of Armidale. Since then, Centacare NENW has grown to offer a wide range of programs and provides a significant portion of mental health and family based services in the New England and North West regions of NSW.

Centacare NENW is committed to providing services that enhance the stability, wellbeing and connectedness of our local communities. We focus our strategic direction on the mental health and wellbeing of Families, Youth, Aboriginal, Torres Strait and CALD peoples and people living with a Disability.



Centacare NENW is a quality accredited organisation and is committed to best practice across all operations and program delivery.

We proudly bring to you this third edition of the Rural Resilience Magazine. Contained within are researched articles and knowledge gathered by our team across all service disciplines - all designed to help you assist your staff, clients and communities.

If you would like to contribute to this quarterly magazine, please email [contact@centacarenw.com.au](mailto:contact@centacarenw.com.au).

Cheers,

Fergus Fitzsimons, CEO



# Rural Resilience

Volume 1 Edition 3 : October 2020

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# ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

A case study

Joe\* was referred to the Family Counselling Program internally through Centacare's Aboriginal Engagement Officer. Joe was experiencing difficulties within his interpersonal relationships and had a background of PTSD suffering flashbacks and AOD addiction.

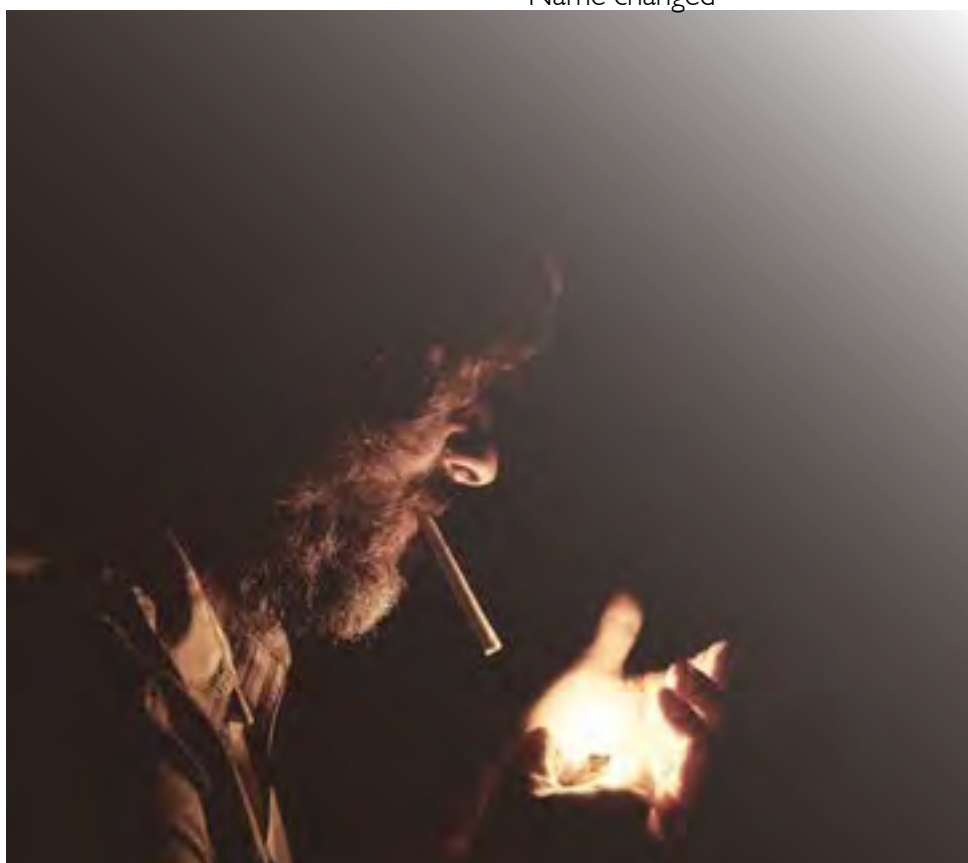
Upon Joe's initial engagement with the service, it was evident that his drug addiction needed to be prioritised. Joe experienced a real desire to attend a rehabilitation facility as he was using "anything he could get his hands on" in order to function daily.

Joe's background included early childhood trauma and with a diagnosis of PTSD, it was recognised the need for a dual treatment centre. He was constantly battling his mental health and found that his drug use was the only way he could "remove himself from reality".

Joe was also in trouble with the law and his pending criminal charges made him ineligible for a number of rehabilitation facilities.

Our Family Counselor provided brief counselling support for Joe to help improve his relationships as well as assisted with advocacy and support to access the rehabilitation support he so desperately required. Our Counselor coordinated a number of intake and assessments with centres over a 3 month period, as well as worked collaboratively with our Aboriginal Engagement Officer. Through this advocacy, Joe was accepted into two rehabilitation centres.

\*Name changed



# Centacare NENW

## Exploring Opportunities

### for our Rural Resilience

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Centacare NENW has continued to provide vital services to clients and is continually looking to operate on a business as usual basis whilst ensuring we provide a safe environment for both staff and clients.

It has been over 6 months since the last reported COVID-19 case in our region, and this is due to the efforts of each and every person in our community.

Centacare NENW continues to advocate for physical distancing and high standards of hygiene and cleaning across all of our offices and in all of our actions in the community.

Centacare NENW has, when required, adapted service delivery to suit, in order to continue to provide mental health and wellbeing services across our region.

For example - Centacare NENW co-ordinates a number of volunteers who attend NSW Government Residential Nursing Homes. These

volunteers provide companionship for isolated individuals who do not have access to local family and friends. With restrictions still in place for many of these homes, our volunteers have continued to provide friendship through letters, postcards and phone calls.

Many of our services are back to operating at pre-COVID standards, but have continued to provide some of the innovations developed and trials through the lock-down period. For example - Our Youth on Track team provided support and advocacy, mentoring and interventions to young people via video game platforms and online chat services. While reliance of these systems has diminished with the restrictions eased, the use of video games as a method of engaging this cohort is continuing.

If you have any questions regarding the services offered by Centacare NENW, or concerns regarding COVID access, please contact us via one of the methods below.

For further information:

ph: 1800 372 826

email: [contact@centacarenenw.com.au](mailto:contact@centacarenenw.com.au)

[centacarenenw.com.au](http://centacarenenw.com.au)

[facebook.com/CentacareNENW](https://facebook.com/CentacareNENW)



# CENTACARE NENW IS COVID SAFE

The last few years have brought our region some interesting challenges – from drought, to flood, and not to mention last summer’s bushfire season. Since the beginning of 2020 we have been challenged again with COVID-19, a global pandemic impacting nearly everyone in one way or another.

Back in February and March, when some businesses were thinking that the virus would not impact us too much, here in Australia, NSW, New England North West, Centacare NENW began the process of becoming COVID Safe. Being COVID Safe demonstrates Centacare NENW’s commitment to our communities – our staff, our clients, their families, their colleagues, their friends. Being COVID Safe means having in place actionable strategies around hygiene and safety, physical distancing, record keeping and staff wellbeing.

In April 2020, Centacare NENW devised their COVID-19 Treatment Plan – a live document adapting and developing based on Australian Government advice. This document guided Centacare NENW’s response to the pandemic, outlining the 3 stages of operations. These 3 stages would be triggered, based on the prevalence of cases in our towns/regions, and/or government restrictions.

In May 2020, our team developed our Return to Work Transition Plan – aimed at providing better outcomes for our clients and staff as we returned to full office operations.

These documents became the backbone of our COVID-19 Safety Plan – a requirement by the NSW Government to become COVID Safe. While there is no current requirement for organisations in our industry to become COVID Safe to remain open, Centacare NENW opted to register in support of other businesses within our region who are required to be registered.

Centacare NENW’s COVID-19 Safety Plan covers:

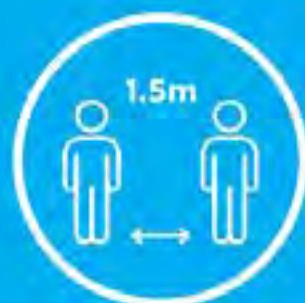
- Our actions in relation to the wellbeing of staff and visitors;
- Our actions in relation to maintaining physical distancing within our offices;
- Our actions in relation to hygiene and cleaning; and
- Recordkeeping.

Centacare NENW was registered as COVIDSafe in July 2020. We continue to maintain the action plan, updating and developing plans and innovations to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff and communities.





We have a  
**COVID-19 Safety Plan**  
and are committed to  
keeping you safe.



Physical  
distancing



Hygiene and  
cleaning



Record  
keeping



Wellbeing of staff  
and customers

**> HELPING BUSINESS GET BACK TO WORK**

Provide feedback on this business  
at [nsw.gov.au/covid-feedback](https://nsw.gov.au/covid-feedback)





# CENTACARE'S YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT

The headspace program of Centacare New England North West received funding from headspace National to deliver youth participation projects across the region. Youth participation involves putting youth voice at the centre of addressing issues specific to young people.

O'Connor Catholic College (OCC) in Armidale was just one of the schools selected for the project. The young people were asked:

- What is working well for you and your peers at school?
- What is not working well for you and your peers at school?
- If you could change something for young people at your school, what would it be?

Several themes emerged from the initial consultation including mental health and wellbeing, privacy, and not having a place to go to have time out to yourself. The young people decided from these themes that a chill out room would be the most suitable solution to these issues.

They set about drawing up plans for the room which included plants, a diffuser, fairy lights, bean bags, blankets, a speaker for music, books and board games. Smart technology including a Google Home Hub and smart lighting were used to create a relaxing feel. Google Home Hub allows students to play meditation and mindfulness videos online and change the light colour in the space with voice command. The space is co-located with the school counselor allowing them to check in with students and also makes the counselling room more inviting to young people.

Young people have said that the room is now private, there is no way to be seen in there, feels comfortable and is a nice space. When asked if there was anything they would change about it they said it's pretty good. This is an excellent outcome for the of young people at OCC who now have a modern and inviting space dedicated to mental health and wellbeing.





# First 1000 Days

## What your child needs

Every child is different, special and precious. But every child needs certain things to grow and become confident, resilient young people, teenagers, and adults. The first 1000 days, from conception to age 2 can set your child up for success.



### Development

In their first 5 years of growth, your child's brain develops more and faster than at any other time.

Their experiences (relationships, and what they see, hear, touch, smell and taste) stimulate the brain, creating millions of connections.



### Relationships

Your child's relationships (with you, your partner, extended family, friends) shape the way they see the world and affect all areas of their development. The responses they receive teaches them about the world and how to think, understand, communicate, behave, show emotions and develop social skills.



### Safety and Security

Children who have a safe and secure base are likely to be more confident about themselves and their ability to explore the world.

Strong families have emotional and physical security, lots of warmth, care and positive attention, firm, fair rules and routines, good communication, and connection to others outside of the family unit.



### Time to Play

Unstructured play helps your child build confidence, feel loved, happy and safe, develop social skills, language and communication, learn about caring for others and the environment, and develop social skills.



### Healthy Environment

A healthy environment for your child includes clean air, good hygiene habits, brushing teeth twice a day, being sun smart, and using medications only as recommended or prescribed.



### Healthy Food

Your child, once eating solids, need a wide variety of healthy foods and water. It is normal for children's appetite to change from day to day, so don't force them to eat or offer food rewards - think about what they are eating over a week rather than one particular day.



Centacare NENW can provide support to your family, including parenting education, peer support groups, and case management.

1 800 372 826





Ruth\*, in her late 60s, presented to Centacare NENW for problem gambling at the advice of her concerned family. Ruth reported that her gambling had started as a social thing and had gotten out of hand over a period of 6 months. Through therapy it was identified that Ruth was experiencing grief over the loss of her husband and gambling had been providing an escape from those feelings. Ruth engaged in therapy for 3 months, during which she self-excluded (voluntary gambling bans supported by the Clubs NSW/AHA), undertook grief counselling and completely ceased gambling. The woman took up new social activities and no longer felt the need for escapism that gambling had been providing.

Rob\*, in his 30s, had comorbid addictions of AOD and gambling. Rob engaged Centacare NENW psychology services late 2019, in an effort to reduce his AOD dependencies. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rob voiced concerns about isolation, and the impact it would have on his AOD use and gambling. During the first wave of COVID in our region, Centacare NENW continued to provide Rob support, via tele-health and face to face services when appropriate. Rob recently identified that without the ongoing support during the lock down, he felt he would have relapsed with his AOD use.

Lorna\*, a mother of an adult son who had problem gambling issues, accessed our Gambling Help e-therapy service for personal support when her son was being charged with serious legal offences. Lorna engaged in services for 6 months, during which the Centacare NENW therapist focused on building Lorna's own resilience and wellbeing. Sessions also helped her to develop some insight into her son's addictions and behaviour. At the completion of her sessions, Lorna had reengaged in life, attending various regular social events, was practicing good self-care and healthy routines, letting go of unhelpful guilt and overall reporting a positive wellbeing.

\*not real names



# SUICIDALITY SCALE

by Michelle Oaten (Provisional Psychologist)

## 1. WISHING I WOULDN'T WAKE UP FOR AWHILE.

Having a loved one or client who experiences suicidal thoughts can be very difficult and stressful, many people find it hard to ask about suicidal thoughts in the first place or find it hard to gauge where a person is at in their level of suicidality after they have disclosed.

## 2. TOTALLY FINE IF I JUST STOPPED EXISTING.

Heidi Fischer, a mental health advocate, created a scale that is a friendly and accessible. The scale is an aid to initially guide a conversation around suicide, but also useful for psychoeducation or keeping track of someone's level of suicidality.

## 3. UNSURE WHAT THE POINT OF LIFE IS AND WHY I SHOULD LIVE.

Heidi experiences MDD (major depressive disorder), PTSD and anxiety, and wanted to make suicidal thoughts easier to talk about. "Talking saves lives."

## 4. THINKING A LOT ABOUT ENDING LIFE BUT NOT TAKING ACTION OR PLANNING.

The scale can be shared with families or care worker and enables them to talk in colours or numbers. It provides both parties with a common language, along with simplifying and normalizing the individuals' experience of suicidality and aid in safety planning. This could help make a confronting and daunting task easier to navigate.

## 5. CONSIDERING METHODS AND PLANNING.

More information on Heidi Fischer and her suicidality scale can be found at <https://themighty.com/2020/08/scale-to-help-explain-suicidal-thoughts/>

## 6. IMMINENTLY IN DANGER OF ATTEMPTING A PLAN.



# DISENGAGEMENT AND RELUCTANCE TRANSFORMS INTO OPENNESS THROUGH PLAY

A Youth On Track Case Study

Youth on Track (YoT) received a referral for a male, aged 13, in the Armidale area in October 2019. Centacare NENW's YoT caseworker met with the young person and their mother at the family home, and the young person (who we will call Dane\*) agreed to participate.

Dane had issues surrounding his behaviour, attitude and anti-social peer association. This was evident through physical altercations he had been involved in, multiple suspensions from school, pro-criminal attitudes and negative interactions with authority figures.

Initially, the YoT caseworker organised a meeting at the local high school to discuss education options with Dane and his mother. During this meeting, a set of goals were collectively decided upon, which centred on a re-integration plan that included attending an alternate education program as well as days in mainstream school. Not long after starting he became involved in several physical altercations with other students at the high school. This led to him being placed in a separate suspension class based at a local primary school.

Dane's engagement was sporadic, and this was made more difficult due to the restrictions implemented in April due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With home visits and offsite travel suspended temporarily, Dane's participation decreased further to a point where no meaningful support was able to be provided.

With Dane disengaged from all services and reluctant to come into the office, the caseworker discussed the online gaming intervention with his parents. An online gaming session was organised, and the caseworker played some games with Dane while talking about school work, COVID-19 and life in general.

After a few sessions, Dane was keen to attend the office for some support with school work that had been sent to him and a general catch up outside of his home. During this session, the caseworker learned that the Dane's mum had lost her job due to the pandemic. As part of the holistic service provided by Centacare, the YoT program purchased phone credit for the Dane and food vouchers for the family as they awaited financial support from Centrelink.

Since the COVID restrictions have been implemented, Dane's engagement in the program has increased drastically. The caseworker has found the use of video game sessions to be a great tool in strengthening the relationship and maintaining engagement. Dane is continuing to engage well in all aspects of the program and is making significant progress towards achieving his goals. He is completing all of his required schoolwork, reducing his recidivism assessments scores, and has not re-offended since consenting to the program. The caseworker has noted a significant increase in the openness in discussing his behaviours and improved insight into the effects of those behaviours on others.

To learn more about Centacare NENW's Youth on Track program and our Online Gaming Intervention, call us on 1800 372 826 or see the article in our last edition of Rural Resilience.

\*not his real name



# SELF CARE V SELFISHNESS

Remember the old Cliché of “Take care of yourself first or you will have nothing left to give others?” Why do we all feel so guilty about refuelling our own minds and bodies? Here is some food for thought; - if we were selfish, would we feel guilty about taking that 20-minute bath? Would we feel guilty about taking that afternoon off with mates for a hit of golf? No. One might say that would be narcissistic and/or self-absorbed.

There is certainly a difference between being self-absorbed and needing to take care of our own self-care; after all it is healthy to do so. By ignoring signs of tiredness, an increased irritability, heightened emotional state and feeling stress a lot more than usual; we are ignoring our minds and bodies asking for that time out to re-fuel and improve our emotional and mental wellbeing.

Self-care does not need to get to the point of needing an emergency time-out; it can be incorporated in to your day-to-day life by setting aside a window of 15-30minutes. Depending on person to person, it is up to the individual to decide what it is that is beneficial to your own wellbeing as you know best what your interests are and what works for your own routine. Self-care doesn't mean spending money or “gifting yourself things” i.e. shoes and clothes, it is your intuitive side asking for you to dig deep and do something fun, do something relaxing and/or do something you haven't done since you were a child that you used to love!

Let's listen to our own minds and bodies and let's give ourselves permission to be you for 20minutes today after all; no one around us is going to benefit from a burnout YOU.







# SELF CARE

6 Ways of looking after yourself  
Types of Self Care

Listen to or play music



Create some art



Talk to someone

Journal

**1** Emotional  
connect, process, reflect

Walk



Stay hydrated




Sleep



Eat nutritiously


**2** Physical  
improve physical health

Call family



Go on a date with your partner


Have brunch with your friends



Grab a coffee with a colleague


**3** Social  
nurture relationships with people

Organise your closet



Budgeting


Create a meal plan



Do some personal development


**4** Practical  
prevention of future stress

Puzzles



Read

Visit a museum or science centre



Chess

**5** Mental  
stimulate mind or intellect

Yoga or Meditation



Worship or Pray



Being in nature

**6** Spiritual  
nurture your spirit



# Dear Diary...

Remember when we were all trusting our biggest secrets to “Dear Diary”? Like everything that was old becomes new again we now have “Journaling”. What’s it all about? Journaling allows you to put thoughts, feelings, concerns or worries out of your head and onto paper helping your world to seem clearer! It can help you gain control of your emotions and improve your mental health.

Lots of people are reporting that it helps with their anxiety and stress levels and it is proving a great way to raise their coping mechanisms. Writing things down allows them to track their symptoms and to notice the things they are triggered by.

Journaling also allows us to tell ourselves what we are doing that is positive and to identify those behaviours or thoughts that are impacting negatively on us.

Forget perfect punctuation. Buy a Journal, one that reflects your personality... because you deserve it! Decide on a set time that you can devote to using your Journal. Pick a time where you won’t be disturbed and are free to relax and just write down your thoughts, worries and ideas.

Give it a try...it’s worth dedicating some time to improving your mental, physical and emotional health.

Today was...

I feel...

Tomorrow will...

I’m worried about...





# RURAL PARENTING RESILIENCE IN WALGETT!

Centacare NENW has been providing the Rural Parenting Resilience Program (RPRP) in Walgett since 2015. From early September, RPRP services will be delivered by a local, directly from our Walgett offices.

RPRP is a free and flexible parenting support program, providing playgroups, peer support groups, parenting education and school readiness programs. These programs assist and support parents and carers by working with them to enrich their wellbeing, skills and parenting practices.

Since its inception, RPRP has been provided in Walgett via outreach from Centacare NENW's Moree office. Our case workers travelled regularly to provide the support to parents in the area. Recently, due to a restructure internally and based on demand and community need, Centacare NENW has employed a permanent RPRP team member to be based in our Walgett office, and service the Walgett and Lightning Ridge region.

Across the region, RPRP provides the following services to parents and carers:

Parenting skills development:

Bringing Up Great Kids

Circle of Security

Moving Forward

Black Box Parenting

Tuning Into Kids

Playgroups:

Young Mums and Bubs Playgroup

Peer Support Groups:

Parenting Peer Support Group

Grandparents and Carers Support Group

RPRP services are available in Moree, Inverell, and Walgett, with outreach to Toomelah, Boggabilla, Tenterfield, Glen Innes, and Lightning Ridge - contact us to find out when we're near you.





## COLLEEN'S STORY

Colleen is a Centacare NENW Community Visitor's Scheme Volunteer

Falling in love at the age of 16 with the man I later married for almost fifty years, I guess I never experienced loneliness. At the time of losing him to bad health, I began to know that my lonely times had to be fulfilled with other interests.

I have always been very fond of the aged. I think this was due to a beautiful loving grandmother, who I boarded with during the week, only going home by bus on weekends. From High School, Technical College, through to my working years up until my marriage, these were precious times. Learning from her involved handicrafts of all kinds, along with gardening after school and work.

Four and a half years ago after becoming a widow and realising I had too much time alone, when I was asked if I would become a volunteer visitor to Nursing homes, I accepted the offer and joined the volunteer visitors group to visit Moonbi House. I have been visiting fortnightly 3 lovely aged ladies.

One of which is in Dementia Unit, does not remember me from one visit to the next, but warms my heart with her smile, beautiful blue eyes and the tightness to which she holds my hand. The conversation is quite difficult but when it's time for me to leave I find it hard to say goodbye as her warmth affects me and I feel so sad for her.

For the other two ladies I have also become quite attached. One has regular family visits; the other only has a daughter in Tasmania who phones every night. I am not able to do much for these ladies but I do believe just that point of contact each time may be a small blessing to them in their latter stage of life.

Sadly through COVID no visitation has been allowed but on occasions I have made phone calls and have sent cards by post on several occasions.

1 MIN  
11 AM  
11 NOV

# 2020



**ON 11 NOVEMBER 1918, THE GUNS OF THE WESTERN FRONT FELL SILENT AFTER FOUR YEARS OF CONTINUOUS WARFARE. IN THE FOUR YEARS OF THE WAR MORE THAN 330,000 AUSTRALIANS HAD SERVED OVERSEAS, AND MORE THAN 60,000 OF THEM HAD DIED.**

**EACH YEAR ON THIS DAY AUSTRALIANS OBSERVE ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE AT 11AM, IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED OR SUFFERED IN ALL WARS AND ARMED CONFLICTS.**





Centacare NENW is a registered NDIS provider with a friendly, trained team ready to enrich the lives of all people with disabilities. We encourage you to choose your own adventure; and live life your way, with freedom.

We involve you, and your family and carers; finding ways to assist you to achieve your goals.

Ask us about Supported Independent Living, Plan Management, Coordination of Supports, Therapeutic Supports, Behaviour Support, and Counselling.

**Armidale, Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Inverell,  
Moree, Narrabri, Tamworth, Walgett**

**ph: 1 800 372 826**  
**centacarenenw.com.au**





# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR STAFF'S WELLBEING?

This is a question Centacare NENW management asked itself after the restrictions started being eased from the NSW COVID lock down.

While Centacare is a mental health and wellbeing organisation, we focused on the mental health and wellbeing of our clients and stakeholders during the height of the pandemic in April and May. Our staff, who we congratulate for their efforts, all rose to the challenge, providing innovative ways to engage our client cohort, while maintaining social distancing and heightened hygiene standards.

Some of our staff worked from home for a period, some remained in the office, and others did a split, depending on client needs. During this time, Centacare NENW increased our supervision for staff, with regular check-in calls, and coffee breaks held via Zoom and Teams.

Once all staff returned to the office, management began to ponder how the changes, both internally (organisation based) and externally (restrictions that impacted staff social time), were being handled by the staff cohort.

The response from a Centacare management perspective was to hold a Staff Wellbeing Day - well, actually, 3 staff wellbeing days - one in Armidale, one in Tamworth and one in Moree. These days will provide staff with skills and strategies to look after their own wellbeing, and also provide support for the team during this ongoing COVID period.

If you would like to know more about our Staff Wellbeing Workshops, contact our Principal Psychologist in our Tamworth office.



# STRESSORS OF CHRISTMAS

By Brenna Castro (Media Manager)

Each year it feels like Christmas comes earlier and earlier. I can imagine that when you turned the page and saw the pictures on this page, you thought "Already?!"

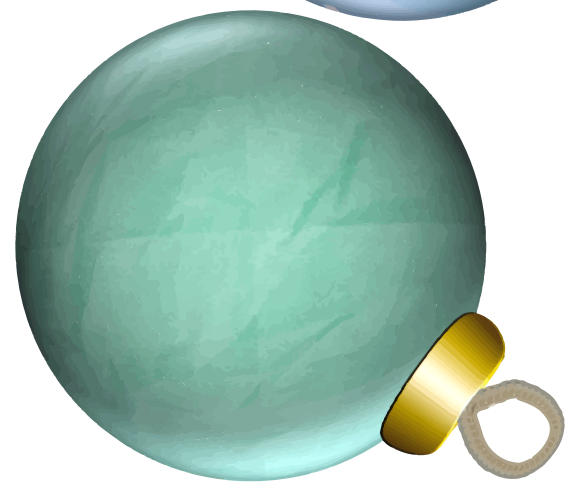
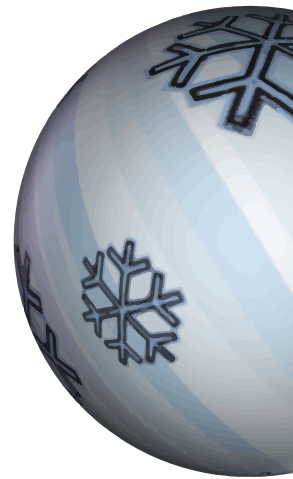
Some of us revel in Christmas – decorations are up, Christmas music is played, and the house smells of nutmeg and cinnamon as soon as we hear the first carol in the shopping centre. For others this time of year is stressful – full of anxiety. Christmas music sends us back to bed, to pull the covers over us and wait it out until January.

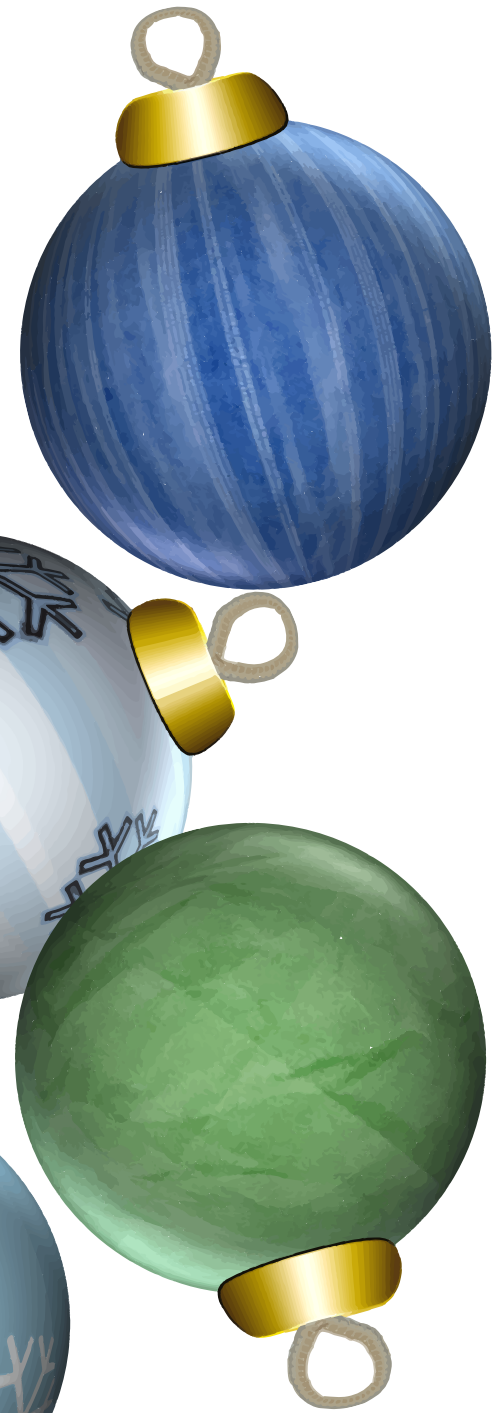
Most Christmas stressors can be categorised into one of three groups:

1. Money – who to buy gifts for, and how much to spend. Can you afford to fly to visit Nan, and what about the extra hours that work wants you to do. The money would be good, but the time...
2. Family tension – family time v me time. Sometimes this is a no-win proposition.
3. Loneliness – even if you are in a couple, or have a big, close family, you can feel lonely at Christmas.

Coping strategies during this time tend to focus on drinking too much, eating too much, spending too much or all of the above. Here are some timely tips, in the lead up to Christmas 2020:

1. Christmas is a great way to show your family and friends that you care, but that doesn't mean you have to spend a lot of money. Aunt Betty would probably love a homemade fruit cake (or card, or drawing, or ...) as much as that \$50 necklace with a lady beetle on it.
2. Create a Christmas gift budget – and stick to it. January will be difficult if you overspend, so try to identify a realistic budget for all your gifts and take it with you when you go shopping.
3. Shop early. Shopping at the last minute will ensure you are caught up in crowds, and potentially panic buying. Shopping early also means that if you need to get something delivered you won't run out of time before the big day.
4. If you are hosting during the Christmas season, plan your menu in advance. Some stores have sales on 'Christmas' foods in the weeks leading up to the 25th that you won't be able to get on Christmas Eve. Just make sure that whatever you buy will keep until the day, or can be frozen. Alternatively, make your event a potluck. Having everyone bring a dish means less stress for you and provides everyone with more variety.
5. Don't fall into the trap that bigger is better when it comes to decorating at Christmas time. A minimalist look can be just as festive. Think 'Stickmas Tree', a handful of decorations and a cinnamon candle on the table. Google minimalist Christmas decorations for ideas. Alternatively, if you like to have 'new' decorations each year, host a Decoration Swap mid-November with your family and friends. As new decorations, zero cost.
6. Regardless of your family make-up, there always seems to be tension at Christmas time. Whether it's an old grudge, a new expectation (yours or theirs), a changed family dynamic or something else, Christmas seems to bring it to the surface with more 'Family Time' than usual.





a. For an old grudge – if you won't be seeing the other party, leave it alone. If you will, sit down with them and talk it out. If you cannot come to a solution, make a pact that you will call a truce for the Christmas festivities – not just for your sake but for the whole family.

b. Be realistic about what (and how much) you can do at this time of year. Time seems to speed up, leaving nowhere near enough time to visit Uncle John's ex-next door neighbour who used to give you lollies as a kid and now lives an hour away. While Uncle John (or you) might have this expectation, make sure it isn't adding unnecessary pressure.

c. New family dynamics can make this time of year challenging. Whether you (or someone in your family) have recently separated, partnered up, had a baby, or lost a loved one, understand that what may have happened in the past may not be possible this year. Separated parents will need to talk about how they are working the logistics of Christmas Day with the kids, blended families will have the added challenge of additional parents (and where is the dog celebrating this year?). Talk about things early so everyone can get organised and make appropriate plans, and if you just cannot make an event, be honest about why and suggest alternative times to get together.

7. Christmas is the time when it seems like everyone has a partner, a happy family, a dog. The feeling of loneliness is heightened at Christmas time. You were happy with the state of your life in September, but come mid-November and you are trolling the online dating apps and scrolling through the rescue kittens site. Both partners and kittens are big commitments and shouldn't be entered into just because it's Christmas time. If you are feeling lonely, try:

a. Volunteering. Local churches, shelters and charity groups always need help at this time of year.

b. Hosting an orphan's supper. You might be surprised how many people spend Christmas alone. This might be because their family is overseas or interstate. With COVID, it might just mean that they cannot travel to see them. Host a potluck (remember your budget) where anyone who is on their own brings a plate to your place for food and fun (Cluedo anyone?).

c. If your friends and family are overseas, arrange for a Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime Christmas – all of these apps are able to conference chat, so get everyone together, fill up your glass and have a virtual get together.

8. Don't overeat. Christmas is the best time for food. Every house you go to seems to have an endless supply of mince pies, fruit cake, ham, lollies, nuts, stone fruit, chocolate truffles and sugar cookies. (It's impolite to not accept, isn't it?). Overeating will almost guarantee your 2021 resolutions will include exercise and/or dieting. Moderation is the key at this time.

9. Don't drink too much (you knew it was coming didn't you?). Drink in moderation, drink plenty of water, be aware of your limits, and do not drink and drive. Investigate alcohol free or reduced alcohol beverages and mock-tails and substitute these at parties. You'll still feel like you are participating in the fun, but won't have the headache the next day – WIN!

Christmas can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be. A little bit of planning, organisation and forethought and you will get through this year's silly season relatively unscathed. Merry Christmas.

*If you find that you need to talk to someone this season, or at any time of year, Centacare NENW has psychologists across the New England North West region for face to face or video appointments. Speak with your GP about getting a referral or call us to find out about other pathways.*

*Centacare NENW is not a crisis centre. If you need immediate assistance you can call:*

*Triple 0 (000)*

*Lifeline (13 11 14)*

*Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800)*

*Mens Helpline (1300 789 978)*

*Suicide Call Back Service (1300 659 467)*

*Mental Health Access Line (1800 011 511)*



# CENTACARE NENW PROGRAMS

## MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

**Psychology and Clinical Services** - Counselling and psychology services via face to face, telephone and video conferencing

**Employee Assistance Program** - Counselling and psychology services via face to face, telephone and video conferencing, provided by your employer

**Catholic Schools Office Program (CSO)** - Counselling and psychology services provided in-school for teachers, support staff and students

**National Psychosocial Support Program** - Support and advocacy for individuals with psychosocial disabilities

**Gambling Help Services** - Free counselling services provided to individuals impacted by their own or a family member's problem gambling

## FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS

**Family Rural Resilience Program (FRRP)** - Free and flexible early intervention, wellbeing support service for 0 to 18 year olds

**Rural Parenting Resilience Program (RPRP)** - Free and flexible parenting support program

**Family Support Program** - Family focused, culturally appropriate support services, including mediation, counselling, case management, education and peer support

**Specialised Family Violence Services** - support to children, individuals and families impacted by family and domestic violence

**Family Law Pathways Network (FLPN)** - Networking and training for family law practitioners

**Emergency Relief** - Assistance to individuals and families in Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Moree in imminent financial hardship

**Community Visitors Scheme** - Visitor volunteers for residents in Aged Care Facilities

## CULTURAL PROGRAMS

**Aboriginal Wellbeing Program (AWP)** - Wellbeing program designed for our Indigenous communities in Moree, Narrabri and Gunnedah

**Culturally Appropriate Services** - Culturally appropriate support, advocacy and education provided to CALD communities

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

**headspace Tamworth** - Free mental health and wellbeing support for young people aged 12 to 25 years, with mild to moderate presentations

**Nurturing Resilience and Growth (NRG)** - Free mental health and wellbeing support for young people aged 12 to 25 years, with complex presentations

**Youth on Track (YOT)** - Free case management program for young people at risk of developing long term involvement with criminal justice system

**Youth Drug and Alcohol Service** - Free case management program for young people with alcohol and or other drug concerns

## DISABILITY PROGRAMS

**Disability Inclusions** - Disability programs provided under NDIS plans include plan management, coordination of supports, therapeutic supports and behaviour supports

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Centacare NENW may have limits on the number of people who can attend our groups and sessions. We continue to provide support across the region via telehealth or videoconferencing if appropriate.

Please call us on 1800 372 826 to find out how to access our services.



# SHORT COURSES

**Resilient Kids:** Aims to develop resilience, increase ability to cope with change, provide opportunities for self-expression, increase self-esteem, and enhance kids' communication abilities. For young people 6 to 12 years.

**S.U.P.E.R:** Seriously Understanding Personal Experience and Resilience (SUPER) Program is designed to build skills, knowledge and resilience within the areas of anxiety and worry. For young people 8 to 12 years.

**R.A.G.E and S.C.R.E.A.M:** Re-navigating Anger and Guilt Emotions (RAGE) and Sisters Calmly Releasing Emotions and Modelling (SCREAM) are strengths based programs aimed to develop young people's ability to manage overwhelming emotions. For young people 11 to 17 years.

**Smiles:** Aims to address the needs of children who are supporting family members with a mental illness. There are inclusion criteria for this program. For young people 8 to 11 years.

**Surviving Your Adolescent:** Provides parents with useful skills for dealing with teenage behaviour. Find out what is normal behaviour, how to manage risk taking, tips to maintain and improve your relationship, and the four cardinal sins (what not to do).

**Toolkit for Dads:** Provides fathers with skills for parenting, including what children need, smarter ways to parent, new ways to discipline and self-care for dads.

**Building Connections:** Aims to help parents have healthy and strong relationships with their children.

**Parenting on Purpose:** Explores habits and filters as parents and offers strategies to take the stress out of parenting. Parents learn that connection with the child and deepening the relationship create a solid base from which to discipline. For parents who may like to strengthen their knowledge and skills.

**Keeping Kids in Mind:** Aims to help parents handle strong emotions better, understand how entrenched conflict negatively affects children and provides tips for parenting through tough times. Fees apply for this course.

**Practical Parenting:** Offers strategies to take the stress out of parenting. Stop shouting and start connecting.

**Tuning Into Kids:** Parenting program for parents and carers of pre-school and primary school aged children aimed to increase your skills in communication, understanding your child's needs and emotions and managing tricky situations.

# PEER SUPPORT AND FACILITATED GROUPS

**Laugh and Craft:** Free parenting support group, weekly during school terms. Tenterfield.

**Grandparents and Foster Carers:** Free peer support group for grandparents and carers. Inverell

**Coffee n Chat:** Free parenting support group, weekly during school terms. Inverell.

**Creativ-A-Tea:** Free parenting support group, weekly during school terms. Glen Innes.

**Kids n Co:** Free playgroup, weekly during school terms. Inverell, Emmaville.

**Healthy Connections:** Free fitness based group, weekly during school terms. Inverell.



Our Offices are Located in:

Armidale | Glen Innes | Gunnedah | Inverell | Moree | Narrabri |  
Tamworth | Walgett | headspace Tamworth

With outreach services provided  
across the diocese

Contact Us:

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[www.facebook.com/CentacareNENW](http://www.facebook.com/CentacareNENW)



*Centacare NENW acknowledges the  
traditional custodians of this land and  
pays respect to the elders past and  
present.*