

Rural Resilience

by Centacare NEW



Guyra, 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.

Rural Resilience

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

As we move towards a new financial year, we introduce new programs to the mix, and cease others due to funding changes. As always though, Centacare NENW remains available and open to help our community with all it's mental health and wellbeing needs.

If you would like to contribute to this quarterly magazine, please email contact@centacarenenw.com.au.

Cheers,



Feigus Fitzsimons, CEO



14 year old Peter had been referred to our Youth Drug and Alcohol Service (YDAS) by Mum. She was exhausted and becoming physically unwell in her endeavours to cope with Peter. She was ready to kick Peter out without any support. Peter was failing Year 9 and had an attendance rate of 21%. Peter had been cautioned for loitering and had been spending a lot of time at the park in the middle of the night. Peter was often abusive to their mum and siblings.

At first Mum was sceptical as she didn't think Peter would engage with the service, but was hopeful. As YDAS is a voluntary program the counsellor explained that they would make every effort to let Peter know that they would be there for them if they wished for support, now or in the future. Mum agreed to give it a go and asked the counsellor to contact Peter direct. The first time the counsellor called Peter, Peter shared a sentence of choice words and hung up. Not to be deterred, the counsellor then proceeded to text Peter; explaining what the program was about, what we could assist with and what we don't do – judge, parent, or tell the young person what to do.

Peter rang back two days later and said they would be happy to meet but would make no promises regarding future engagement. That was the first visit for Peter who has now been actively involved in the program since December 2020. Peter and the counsellor have covered many things in their appointments, including drug use, peer pressure, self-esteem, and relationship building.

One thing that was always apparent to the counsellor was Peter's limited self-awareness and accountability for themselves and the people they hurt. Peter can be very strong willed and often did not take kindly to people trying to reason with them. Peter often would go on the attack if their thinking was challenged. The YDAS casework encouraged Peter to work out this issue for themselves with minimal prompting.

Peter is now in stable housing with a foster family and is thriving in school and sporting activities. Peter and Mum now share a good relationship and Peter is realising their impact on others and that their decisions have consequences. Peter is making goals and is becoming future orientated.

Recently Peter was asked why they had listed their foster parent as the only one who can sign them out of school, when previously Peter had been doing that himself. Peter's response was "I don't trust myself to use this privilege responsibly so for now I will get my foster Mum".

Centacare NENW

Exploring Opportunities

for our Rural Resilience

Centacare NENW is a registered COVID-19 Safe Organisation and operates in accordance with a COVID-19 Safety Plan, ensuring compliance with COVID-19 Public Health Orders, and managing risks to staff and visitors in accordance with Work Health and Safety laws.

Our Safety Plan covers the wellbeing of staff, clients and visitors; physical distancing; hygiene and cleaning requirements; and record keeping.

Centacare NENW has adapted to new ways of providing services since the onset of this pandemic, with more formal processes around the provision of programs via e-services. While many programs have returned to face to face delivery, the option for e-services remains across our region. This ensures that our clients continue to have choice and control in the delivery of these services. It also allows for continuity of care, on the off chance that an individual is required to self-isolate.

At present all Centacare NENW staff are working from within our Centacare offices and providing services in accordance with our COVID-19 Safety Plan. The recent Public Health Alert that included Moree venues was communicated with staff. All staff across the geographic (not just Moree) were provided with the NSW Government Health advice in relation to venues, dates and times when they may have been in contact with an individual with the virus. Locations for a number of COVID-19 testing clinics were also provided. Centacare NENW had 2 staff members impacted by this alert, both of whom returned negative results.

Our region has reported low numbers of COVID-19 cases since the inception of the pandemic. This is due to the nature of our communities – the connectedness and the willingness to get in and help our fellow neighbours. Simple measures significantly reduce the risk of getting COVID-19 (and the common cold) and of spreading it:

- Clean your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub/sanitiser;
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing or use your elbow, not your hands;
- Avoid close contact with people unwell with cold or flu-like symptoms, and stay home if you have these symptoms;
- Avoid touching your face and eyes;
- Greet people with a wave and a smile;
- Maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres from others as much as possible, and avoid crowded places;
- Wear a mask;
- Show your care to loved ones in aged care facilities or hospitals, infants, or people with compromised immune systems due to illness or medical treatment by phone, letters or social media; and
- Use cashless options to buy things

Centacare NENW continues to monitor the situation and will reconsider this matter and provide advice as further updates become available. 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

centacarenenw.com.au

facebook.com/CentacareNENW



MENTAL HEALTH FOR NEW DADS

Written by Pranjal More

With Father's Day just around the corner (Sunday, September 5), it is important to have an open conversation about men's mental health which is often stigmatised and overlooked. This will provide us with a better opportunity to advocate for men's overall health and wellbeing.

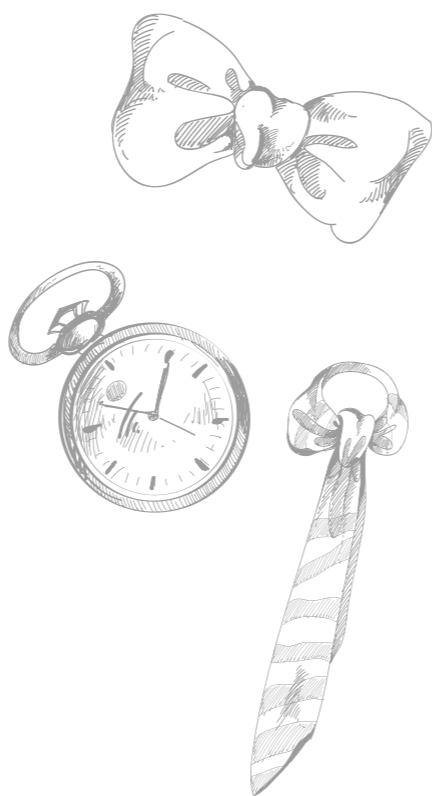
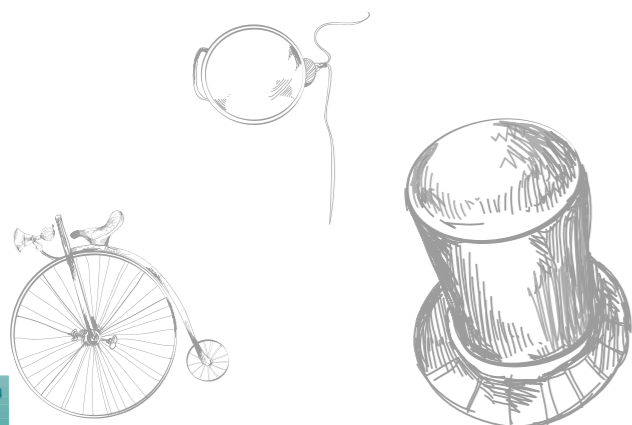
Road to fatherhood highlights a significant change in a man's life. For first time fathers, having a baby can be absolute bliss as well as a frightening and stressful experience at the same time.

According to studies, male partners can suffer considerable hormonal changes and mental health challenges initiated by the transition to parenthood. Loss of sleep, added responsibility, juggling work and family time as well as a reduced social life are examples of the many struggles that first time fathers tend to face. Thus, it is critical for them to look after their wellbeing and feel supported and cared for.

Sleep is an important factor in being an efficient, productive, and alert parent so it's essential to establish a solid sleep schedule that will aid in time management and efficiency in tending to their newborn, their partner as well as for themselves. Having a trade-off responsibility with their partner, collaborating and being open to them about any difficulties will help them stay connected while adjusting to the new and overwhelming task of parenting. This might range from negotiating who gets the night shift baby care to determining who cooks dinner.

Developing positive relationships and engaging with men who are fathers themselves can be a great support system. They will be a great source of guidance, ideas, and support through difficult times because they are likely to have gone through similar experiences. Talking to a health professional will help significantly for first time fathers to understand their emotional experiences and manage stress in a healthy way.

Investing in self-care will allow new fathers to keep their energy up and develop healthy coping mechanisms to overcome the exciting yet pressing milestone in their lives. Adequate support and advice and having access to reliable resources can help first time fathers be resilient in facing challenges during their transition to parenthood.



CIRCLE OF SECURITY

Advertorial

At times all parents feel lost or without a clue about what our children might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what a child was really asking from you. The Circle of Security Parenting program, offered by the Rural Parenting Resilience Program at Centacare NENW is based on decades of research about how secure carer-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

This program provides insight into understanding a child's emotional world and learning to read their emotional needs, supporting their ability to successfully manage their emotions, enhancing the development of their self-esteem, and honouring your innate wisdom and desire for them to be secure.

This free 8 week program is starting in our Moree office in July.



Emma (not her real name) attended every single Circle of Security session without fail. From day one Emma asked questions, was open, honest and vulnerable when working through the program. Circle of Security was difficult for Emma sometimes due to her anxiety, with one of the sessions becoming very overwhelming for her.

Emma stated that having the skills she learnt from Circle of Security has helped her not only manage her own anxiety but her children's as well. Emma loves the TIME IN opposed to TIME OUT behaviour management and uses the new skills every day, making her home life and her confidence to parent much better.



As of July 1st, Gambling Help will be decommissioned and a new holistic service of support known as GambleAware will begin. GambleAware is a support service provided through the Office of Responsible Gambling, of which Centacare NENW is lead agent for the Hunter New England Region. Hunter New England GambleAware provides community awareness and education programs as well as case management, financial counselling, and mental health support to anyone who is affected by problem gambling. The objective of the Hunter New England GambleAware Service is to reduce the harm of problem gambling in the region through education and awareness campaigns and direct client support.

The Hunter New England GambleAware Service is a 5 Level Stepped Care model as recommended by the Australian Department of Health Guidelines. For the purposes of this program, the levels are as follows:

Level 1- Considered to have minor issues and best suited by self help resources and information access.

GAMBLING HELP SERVICE LEVELS UP

Written by Tim Rawson

Level 2- Considered to have mild presentation which can be helped with brief interventions and/or problem solving.

Level 3- Considered to have moderate mental health and/gambling concerns which require professional intervention.

Level 4- Considered to have complex mental health and/gambling concerns which require professional intervention AND case management or care coordination.

Level 5- Considered to have severe mental health and/or gambling concerns which require acute intervention and stabilisation. Such clients require on-referral to acute services/inpatient units such as Emergency Services and HNE Health Centralised Intake.

To access GambleAware support

Ph: 1800 497 065 or

E: gambleaware@centacarenenw.com.au



The Hunter New England GambleAware Service is a multidisciplinary team including:

- GambleAware Regional Manager- A clinical position responsible for operational level coordination, reporting and communication with stakeholders.
- GambleAware Team Leader- A clinical position responsible for local day to day operations and allocations in each region (Hunter and New England).
- Client Intake Officer- These workers will be the first line of contact for most clients, as they will conduct a brief assessment to identify eligibility and level of care required.
- Community Engagement and Care Coordinator- Familiar with local services and supports available, these individuals will provide warm referral pathways where appropriate and be able to deliver community based programs. They will assist with case management support, brief interventions and community engagement.
- Financial Counsellor- A professional support position to assist clients to strengthen their financial literacy and reduce associated stressors.
- Gambling Counsellor- A professional support position to assist clients reduce problem gambling behaviours and improve mental health outcomes.

Clients can be referred to Hunter New England GambleAware Service from any source, including self-referrals and support can include financial counselling, case management, care coordination, and/or individual, relationship and family counselling. To access the support phone 1800 497 065 or email gambleaware@centacarenenw.com.au.



REDUCING THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH, A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Author supplied, but withheld from publication



I experience the impact of anxiety and depression, and have done for a number of years. Recently, I had an unprofessional 'episode' in the workplace, a result of not managing my illness well. In the lead up to the event I was aware that my ability to deal with things was deteriorating, but I felt that it would be okay. I was an adult, I could control this, not have this illness control me.

Needless to say, it controlled me, resulting in a short but sweet unprofessional outburst.

After the event (episode) I sent a message to all of the individuals who witnessed my outburst "In explanation of Friday's outburst, I have a mental health condition that wasn't managed well. This led to my unprofessional behaviour for which I apologise."

Working for a mental health organisation I got back positive responses and a bucket load of support, as you would expect. What I didn't expect were the comments about how 'brave' I was. How 'tough' it would have been to write that message. And it was, but it shouldn't have been.

From a personal perspective, one of the hardest things about managing a mental illness in the workplace is keeping it hidden. I am lucky. I have a manager who I can go to and say, "I am experiencing higher than normal anxiety today," or "My headspace is not right," and they will help me come up with strategies to remain productive. But not everyone has that.

Workplace culture has a profound impact on how employees cope with stress, and deal with mental health concerns. Ways to improve mental health culture and reduce stigma include:

- Normalising conversations about mental health – talking about mental health reduces the stigma and provides reassurance that it is okay to discuss these issues with colleagues and managers.
- Offer professional support and mentoring – this creates an environment where individuals feel supported and encouraged through the good days and the difficult ones. This may be through an Employee Assistance Program, or someone you can talk to in the office.
- Encourage individual fulfilment – commonly felt among individuals who experience mental health concerns is the feeling of low self-worth and low self-esteem. Encouraging your team to work towards individual goals alongside company goals can improve self-worth and help manage stress.
- Challenge commonly-held misconceptions and negative attitudes around mental health – lead by example through using the right words and speak up if you hear someone use harmful language. Also, don't use phrases such as OCD or bi-polar to explain general behaviour – it can be disrespectful and ostracising.
- Education strategies to build capacity of individuals to talk comfortably about mental health - Education is considered effective at building the capacity of managers, supervisors and colleagues to talk comfortably about mental health, so they can initiate conversations about mental health and foster an inclusive workplace culture.

Unfortunately, mental illness is the norm these days, and the sooner we realise that it can affect anyone of us at any time, the more prepared we can be if it happens to us or someone close to us.



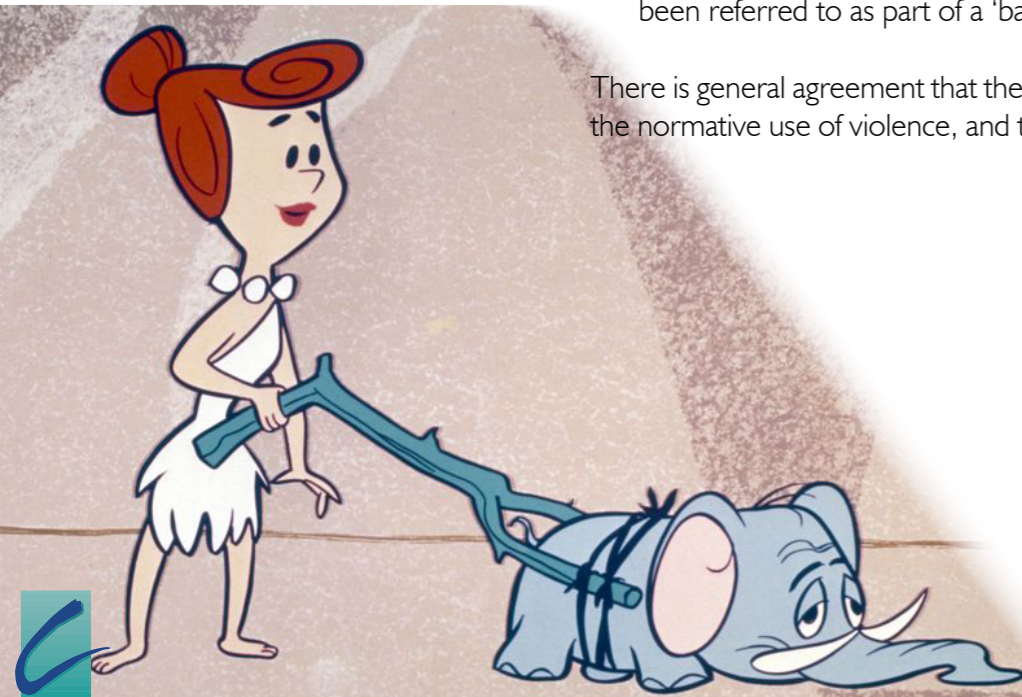
Every single one of us plays a role in violence prevention—whether it's something we're exposed to directly or not. Being an effective bystander doesn't require confrontation or accusation. It is about challenging people to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and sending a message of accountability to enable them to do so.

We don't just have an opportunity to do the important work around raising the bar on acceptable behaviour, we have a responsibility to do so. It is the work we do at an individual level with our peers, our children and our families, that has a ripple effect on the people within our sphere of influence and ultimately makes the difference. This is the philosophy that underpins our approach to violence and discrimination prevention.

It is our aim to raise awareness around the ways in which violence-supportive behaviour is embedded in our culture as well as the subtler issues that support a potentially harmful community. What are violence-supportive attitudes? According to the 2017 National Community Attitudes Summary Report, these are attitudes that:

- Excuse the perpetrator and hold victims responsible by shifting responsibility for violence from the perpetrator and by holding the victim responsible for the violence occurring, or for not preventing it. Attitudes excusing the perpetrator suggest that there are factors that make some men unable to control their behaviour, and that these make the violence excusable.
- Minimise violence against women by denying its seriousness, downplaying the impact on the victim or making the violence and its consequences seem less significant or complex than they really are.
- Disregard the need to gain consent by denying the requirement for sexual relations to be based on the presence and ongoing negotiation of consent. These attitudes rationalise men's failure to actively gain consent as a 'natural' aspect of masculinity (e.g. men's uncontrollable sexual drive), or are based on stereotypes of female sexuality (e.g. that women are passive or submissive in sexual matters).
- Mistrust victim's reports of violence by suggesting women lie about or exaggerate reports of violence in order to 'get back at' men or gain tactical advantage in their relationships with men. Such attitudes have been referred to as part of a 'backlash'

There is general agreement that the causes of violence are related to power, the normative use of violence, and the meaning of being a man or a woman



in a society. Understanding the meaning of a specific act of violence requires looking holistically at the ways in which power is played out in society and taking into account culture and cultural context, such as effects and roles of schools, community, and family, where we live, work, and play, and the processes of how we learn.

Gender norms are not neutral. These norms play out in complex ways that are damaging to both men and women, and maintain gender inequality and disrespect for women. The labelling and confining of people into one of two groups of 'acceptable' norms can pressure people to hide or suppress parts of their personalities and interests in order to conform. For example masculinity, is often assumed to be strong, tough, or assertive. On the other hand, femininity, is seen as caring or sensitive. These attributes are generally seen as positives in men and women respectively. However, when they are applied in reverse, the same characteristics are often seen as inappropriate and undesirable. The traits assumed to comprise masculinity are generally given greater social status or value than those associated with femininity. This can be seen in the way many common descriptions of women are negative, such as that they are 'emotional', and taunts such as 'You hit like a girl.'

It is important to acknowledge that men also experience inequality because of gender norms and structures. The types of expectations created by dominant ideas about masculinity lead to a range of inequalities for men. These include higher rates of suicide, mental health issues, and death and injury from industrial accidents and other dangerous occupations (World Health Organisation.)

Imagine a world where everyone thought of themselves as a leader. Where problematic behaviour wasn't ignored because people felt too unsure about how to handle it. Effective leadership is what stands between us and a peaceful, safe society.

The purpose of bystander training such as MATE (Motivating Action Through Empowerment) is to enable people to have the ability to recognise when a problematic situation is taking place and feel empowered to effectively interrupt the behaviour, providing it is safe for you to do so.

As effective bystanders, holding people accountable for any form of violence, abuse or problematic behaviour is confronting. Strategies are available that assist proactive bystanders in challenging behaviour effectively and respectfully. MATE educates and informs participants on how and why being an active and effective bystander will make a positive difference in the prevention of violence against women.

Centacare NENW staff have been trained to provide MATE training throughout the region to a variety of services and organisations as well as community groups and the general community. The program can cover topics such as:

- Why it is important to challenge problematic behaviour
- The barriers we face, and how we can overcome them
- How to address controlling behaviour, sexism, racism, disrespect in the workplace and harmful attitudes
- Bystander self-care and where to from here

MATE brings each individual in to the conversation about the ways in which we all, as members of society contribute, mostly unknowingly, to the issues that lie beneath gender-based violence. MATE focuses on primary prevention and uncovers how gender-based violence and gender equality are inextricably linked.



Centacare NENW is committed to working with our Aboriginal communities across the region, through recognition, respect and celebration.

Each fortnight, our Aboriginal Liaison Officer runs a Tamworth Men's Group, attended by approximately 15 Aboriginal men. The group meets at the Tamworth Lions Park on a Friday and the men prepare food for the barbeque, cook, yarn and laugh about their lives, successes and struggles. Local services attend to provide information and referral advice in regards to a variety of issues. The group also organises day trips which include fishing, visits to local Aboriginal sacred sites and traditional activities such as making didgeridoos.

RECONCILIATION THROUGH RECOGNITION, RESPECT, CELEBRATION

Written by Robert 'Bobbo' Bergan

Aboriginal On Country Youth Camps are held during school holidays. The camps were created to support young people in making good decisions, staying out of trouble and recognising antisocial behaviour, and are attended by 10 young people each camp. The camps are designed to support the kids who are doing well but may need some encouragement and connection to stay on the right path. Our Aboriginal Liaison Officer teaches them about the land, water, fishing, the bush and how to cook. The next camp is scheduled for the July 2021 school holidays.

Each year Centacare NENW supports the PCYC Nations of Origin competition, held in Newcastle. Nations of Origin is a multifaceted sport, cultural, education and leadership program, which culminates around NAIDOC week annually. The program has four main components: reconciliation, education, cultural identity and sport. This year the event is being held in during the first week of the NSW School Holidays in July. The event helps bridge the gap between justice services such as police and young people and assists in fostering positive relationships into the future. A number of Centacare NENW Youth on Track participants attend the event and Centacare NENW staff support these young people during the competition. A large focused of the event is sharing culture and knowledge among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young people and services. In 2019, the Tamworth side won the Rugby 7s competition, and with the 2020 event cancelled due to COVID, this year we are aiming to retain the trophy.



MORE THAN A WORD. RECONCILIATION TAKES ACTION

Reconciliation takes action, urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation. At the heart of this journey are relationships between the broader Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We all have a role to play when it comes to reconciliation, and in playing our part we collectively build relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures, and futures.

2021 marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal reconciliation process. (www.nrw.reconciliation.org.au) On Thursday June 3, 2021, Peter Gander and Lloyd Munro both received awards as part of the Moree Reconciliation Week. Peter Gander for his Commitment to Reconciliation through Mental Health Recovery and Lloyd Munro for his Commitment to Reconciliation through Mental Health Recovery - Youth Affairs and Sport.

NAIDOC 2021 will see Centacare NENW host a Family Fun Day on July 9 attached to the NAIDOC Touch tournament being run by Tamworth NAIDOC Committee. Various activities will be on offer such as jumping castles, face painting, BBQ's and stalls from Population Health, Uniting, Tamworth Local Aboriginal Lands Council and The Youthie.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP

Written by Brenna Castro (Media Manager)



Globally we face many challenges, crises and forces of division that undermine peace, security, development and social harmony. One such recent crisis is COVID-19. The necessary social distancing has decreased our shared sense of belonging and purpose.

To confront these challenges, their root causes must be addressed by promoting and defending a shared spirit of solidarity that takes many forms — the simplest of which is friendship.

Friendship provides many benefits to both individuals and communities:

- Friendship can prevent loneliness and provide companionship;
- Friendship can increase your sense of belonging, boost happiness and decrease impact of stress;
- Friendship can improve self-confidence and self-worth; and
- Friendship can build bridges between cultures, countries and communities.

Friends come in all shapes and sizes and offer different things. Some friendships are forged in childhood. These friends can be turned to in times of crisis and celebration, such as the death of a loved one or a happy occasion such as a wedding. Others are cemented at college or university when people begin to widen their social circle and incorporate friendships through shared interests. We rely on friends as well as family for support, companionship and advice at various stages of our lives.

Developing and maintaining good friendships takes effort. The enjoyment and comfort friendship can provide, however, makes the investment worthwhile. To meet new people who might become your friends, you have to go to places where others are gathered. Take the initiative rather than waiting for invitations to come your way, and keep trying. Strategies may include:

- Attending community events – Centacare NENW runs a number of groups across the region. Check out page XX for more information;
- Volunteer – Our Community Visitor Scheme is always open to new volunteers who are interested in visiting a resident of an aged care facility – the beauty of friendship is that it flows both ways;
- Take up a new interest – take a community college or education course to meet people who have similar interests;
- Get out in your local neighbourhood – take a walk with the kids and/or dog and meet your neighbours who are also getting out and about.

This year the UN International Day of Friendship is Friday 30 July. Celebrate your friendships, create new friendships and build bridges to peace, security, development and social harmony.



**CENTACARE MOREE
IS PROVIDING A FREE**

MUMS FITNESS GROUP

12 X WEEKLY SESSIONS



**10:30AM-11:30AM
TUESDAYS
CENTACARE MOREE**

**JUNE 15, 22 & 29
JULY 6, 13, 20 & 27
AUGUST 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31**

- ✓ BRING THE KIDS ALONG
- ✓ CHILD-MINDING AVAILABLE
- ✓ SUITABLE FOR ALL FITNESS LEVELS
- ✓ DROP IN WHEN IT SUITS
- ✓ NO NEED TO ATTEND WEEKLY

 **Centacare**
New England North West
Rural Resilience
THE SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE



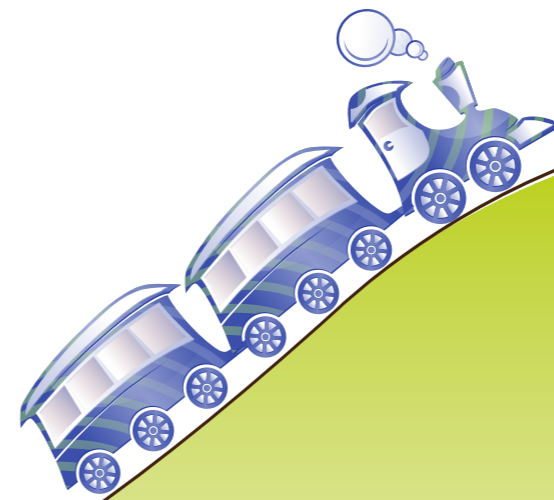
MINDFUL ART

Mindfulness – based art therapy brings together mindfulness and artistic expression in which the process of creating is the important part, not the finished product.

Mindfulness-based art therapy connects the imagination to the body and allows the expression of feelings that you can't get express in words.

How can you participate in Mindfulness-based art therapy?

- Draw a picture of yourself. This is an exercise in self-acceptance. Try to make the picture as realistic as possible and be accepting of any "flaws" that you identify in the picture.
- Mindfully study art materials. Examine art with a mindful eye using all five of your senses. What do you see, feel, touch, hear, taste? Engage in sensory stimulation and monitor your responses to all forms of art in your daily life.
- Use art to express emotions. As you paint, sculpt, draw, or otherwise create art, try to channel the emotions and feelings you are experiencing in your body. Observe any physical sensations while you are drawing or colouring. Express happy or stressful events from your week through your art. Retrieve the feelings that you experience in your body and display them in your art to help recognise your own unmet needs and hidden emotions that you have yet found a way to communicate or notice.
- Create a collage. Make a collage that expresses your feelings and emotions.
- Before-and-after art pieces. Take notice of how you feel before and after creating an art piece to see if you notice improvements in your well-being.
- Come along to Centacare's Mindfulness Art For Kids Program. If you are under 18 and want to give this a go, Centacare Moree is calling for expressions of interest for these workshops: Call 02 6750 8500 to register.



Toby began accessing our Family Rural Resilience Program in March 2021. He had been having difficulty regulating his emotions and this was impacting his interactions with family and friends. Toby was also experiencing issues at school as he had a low self-belief, which made it hard for him to try new things and say no to his friends.

Since March, Toby has had weekly appointments with his Centacare case worker. Together they have worked on activities to assist him with regulating his emotions and improve his self-esteem. Toby worked hard both at home and with his case worker and both he and his mother shared improvements in his interactions both at home and at school.

Toby's mother stated that with the improvement in Toby's behaviour she had changed the way she is interacting with him. In the past Toby's mother worked on a system of taking things away (for example, Toby would not have screen time) whereas now she is using a reward system based on his good behaviour. Toby is able to pick activities that he enjoys, this includes time on technology or time outside on the trampoline as a reward.

Toby now is able to interact with a broader group of peers at school in a healthier way. He stated that some days he enjoys imaginative play and other days he enjoys playing sport in the playground. His increase in self-belief allows him to make decisions that best suit him, rather than trying to appease his peers to avoid feelings of rejection.



The Early Start Pilot Program commenced in September 2019 for the Moree LGA. Centacare NENW was funded through the Primary Health Network to deliver the Early Start Project. This project saw two community organisations appointed to deliver services under one of three streams – Maternal Health, Building Resilience and School Readiness. The Pilot program was finalised in April 2021 with some outstanding results from the two organisations who were successful applicants for the grant.

Initially, an Advisory Committee was formed and consisted of local stakeholders, including a General Practitioner, local Aboriginal representative, Executive Principal, Family Support Manager, Early Intervention Coordinator, Inspector in Charge NSW Police and NSW Aboriginal Health Unit Manager. This diverse group of professionals guided the delivery and enhanced the linkages between local health and community services. Two community partners received a one-off grant of \$100,000 to deliver locally relevant, innovative and evidence based early intervention and prevention initiatives for families, schools and communities.

There was an open tender process conducted and the two successful applicants were Moree East Public School (MEPS) and Aboriginal Maternal Infant Health Service (AMIHS).

MEPS were the successful applicant under the School Readiness and Building Resilience stream. MEPS proposed a cafeteria initiative, which provided children with a healthy hot or cold lunch every day for the cost of \$1.00. The cafeteria was incorporated holistically with a community garden project, local culture and language immersion. The cafeteria initiative included a strong focus on engaging students, staff, parents/carers, community organisations and service providers.

Key points for MEPS are:

- 76% of students believe that the cafeteria helps them want to come to school;
- 83% believe the cafeteria helps their family save time and money;
- 81% believe the cafeteria lunch helps them concentrate and learn;
- 71% prefer the cafeteria than bringing food or using the canteen; and
- 99% of students were using the cafeteria at the completion of the project.

MEPS have had paramount success in the cafeteria program and continue to deliver and evolve as the program continues. The school cafeteria has strong links with student health and wellbeing, attendance, learning engagement, culture, language and social/emotional development. The school has been recognised within the wider community as leaders in the field of diversity and Closing the Gap through the Early Start Project.

AMIHS were identified as the successful applicant for the Maternal Health stream. The grant enabled them to build upon their existing program and enhance their ability to make change in the lives of their client's and families. Their focus was a holistic approach to healthcare, the results of which were improved outcomes for health, improved mortality and morbidity rates and continued services in the community that benefits families into the future. AMIHS aim to provide women, children and families the same healthcare that they are entitled to receive regardless of social demographic. The funding enabled them to purchase resources, which further enhanced their antenatal and postnatal education, further development for staff, fuel and accommodation vouchers, and engagement of key personnel to facilitate



THE EARLY START PILOT PROJECT

Written by Amy Quinlan

healthy lifestyles.

Some key points for the AMIHS program are:

- All participants attended 100% of specialist appointments as well as reporting to children's services if required;
- 98% of new mothers were breastfeeding upon discharge;
- Breastfeeding rates increased from 30% to 75% within the first six weeks;
- 98% compliance for their clinics, including their outreach;
- 100% of new babies were immunised;
- 75% stopped smoking; and
- 100% ceased alcohol.

Due to the outstanding work that AMIHS accomplished through the Early Start grant, they have been recognised through their peers and were nominated for the High Health Care Team Awards, featured in the CEO's report for Hunter New England for the launch of the 'Awakening the Birthing Spirit' and the production of the 2021 calendar was mentioned in the 'Close the Gap' report. Also, we would like to congratulate the AMIHS Team as they have been named Finalists in the HNE Health Excellence Award: High Value Health Care: Excellence in Aboriginal Healthcare.

The Early Start Pilot Project has made strong and meaningful development in both the health and educational sectors. Both services have been incredibly successful in the delivery of their project. They were constantly evolving, ensuring the needs of the community were met.



The R U OK? project began in 2009 when Gavin Larkin, a highly successful advertising executive, began to experience symptoms of depression. This was especially concerning as his father had taken his own life in 1996. In addition to being a project to honour his late father, it was also a method of addressing his own mental health concerns.

Since that time it has developed into a suicide prevention health promotion day which is now recognised nationally as an opportunity to “Start a conversation that could save a life”.

Some argue that we shouldn't need a day to ask after others' wellbeing - that we should intrinsically care for each other and be aware of the experiences of others. However, as most people would agree a question asked everyday soon elicits automatic responses. For example, when greeted with “Hello and how are you today?” the innate desire to say “Yeah, good, fine, thanks and you?” often overrides our internal state of emotion. Do we really listen when people respond “Good thanks”?

R U OK? DAY

Written by Avril Oakley-Hollow

We have become conditioned to the concept of not burdening others with our feelings and thoughts as time, culture and societal pressure guide us to not divulging our concerns or worries to those around us.

This then highlights the validity of having a dedicated national day to delve deeper and find out what people around you are experiencing and how they are truly feeling. This process can be a difficult one and sometimes you may not know how to start the conversation, or respond appropriately if someone does say “Actually, I'm not okay.” This is where Gavin Larkin's resources can help – check out www.ruok.org.au to find out how a conversation could change a life.

RU OK? Day continues each September and is a stand out event within our community and communities Australia wide. Together we can work toward a world where we're all connected and are protected from suicide.

Start a conversation using these 4 steps

1. Ask RU OK?



2. Listen without judgement



3. Encourage action



4. Check in



TUNING IN TO KIDS

FREE

6 WEEK PARENTING COURSE

WHEN: 2pm-4pm

Tues 13, 20 & 27 July

Tues 3, 10 & 17 August

WHERE: Centacare

48 Auburn Street, Moree

Registration Essential

Please Call (02) 6750 8500

- Learn how to understand and regulate your child's emotions
- Help your child develop emotional competence
- Reduce challenging behaviours

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE DEAL WITH CHANGE

Written by Vicki Breen

Changes can occur in just about every part of life. It could be things at home, it could be things at school, it could be with friends – it could really be just about anything

How we feel about and respond to a change depends on a number of different factors, such as whether the change was expected and how much of an impact it will have. Unexpectedly having to move interstate is likely to have a bigger impact on a child than having a casual teacher at school for the day.

Change is such a normal and common part of life. It's important that we are equipped to deal with it and help our children to be able to cope and deal with it effectively too.

How to help your child handle change

Change is normal. Whether a change is wanted or unwanted, whether it's expected or a surprise, change is a normal part of life. It's important that we normalise change and emphasise your child's ability to be okay with it and respond adaptively (with the support of trusted adults of course).

Be aware of how much change is going on in a child's life – the more changes happening, the bigger the challenge to deal with them effectively. When changes can be scheduled, it can be helpful to pace things out and avoid a whole stack of changes occurring in a short period of time. Children need time to adjust. Sticking to as many normal routines as possible will promote coping.

Prepare your child for change. Let them know what's going on. Allow your child to ask questions and seek clarifications – this can help reduce any worries and anxieties they may be experiencing about the change. Talking is important but listening is super crucial as well. Take the time to hear what your child has to say about what they think and how they feel

about the situation.

Accept your child's thoughts and feelings around change – they could be quite different to yours. Show your child understanding, particularly when it's a big change - they might have some big feelings about it. If your child is upset or angry, allow time and space for them to process it all.

Work with your child to identify the positives of the change. If you choose to look for the good in a situation, you're likely to find something. It's okay to acknowledge the downsides of a change, just don't get stuck on them.

Help your child to use positive self-talk to cope with the change. You could encourage your child to say helpful things to themselves like "This is tough but I'm going to get through it" or "I'm a bit unsure but I know I can ask for help".

Offer your child the opportunity to make choices - this may help them regain a sense of control in the situation. Keep the number of choices limited, maybe 2 or 3, to avoid your child getting overwhelmed.

It's okay to anticipate that your child may not initially handle things well and that you may see some behaviour that is not ideal. If you are prepared for this, you're more likely to cope with it yourself. Respond with the empathy, kindness and love that they need to be alright in the long run.

If you have concerns that your child is not adjusting and coping, even after being given support and time to do so, a referral to counselling may be really helpful.

(Previously published as a Centacare NENW Catholic Schools Office Newsletter)



LADIES WHO LUNCH

A Case Study

Aimed at providing services for people for whom clinical care is insufficient to help them build capacity for daily living, the National Psychosocial Supports program provides care for participants under what used to be the PHaMs (Personal Helpers and Mentors) program whom have not tested eligibility under the NDIS.

The program works with a cohort of clients delivering case management, psycho-education and direct psychosocial support services purposely designed to cater for people with severe mental illness who have reduced psychosocial function.

As part of the program, Centacare NENW staff deliver group programs and outings, two of which recently enjoyed a combined workshop at Platform Foods x Studio.

The ladies from the Wee Waa Ladies Group and the Narrabri Luncheon group met at Platform in Wee Waa and enjoyed:

- A healthy eating/nutrition workshop;
- A freshly made juice;
- A cooking demonstration;
- The opportunity to create their own "Poke Bowl";
- A communal lunch in the sun; and
- A tour of the gym facilities.

One of the ladies afterward shared the following story:

"At our weekly Wee Waa Ladies Group we regularly discuss recipes and "cheap eats" to help with budgeting. I felt so inspired after our Platform Studio cooking demonstration that I invited a group of church ladies my home to have lunch. I had not hosted a luncheon for years! Our Ladies Group sat and discussed different recipe ideas, prepping time and ways to decorate my table so I would be ready for the day."



OUR STORY

Platform foods x studio is a meal prep and group training service located in Wee Waa NSW

"Simple food, Simple training" is what we do.

Plfx is a representation of what we are passionate about and what we want to encourage in our community. Simple food and simple training to simplify your life and promote overall health.

Our foods are seasonal and locally sourced 'handmade to order' meals prepared by Elite. Our meals are wholesome, healthy, packed with nutrition and high quality proteins, fats and carbs. We source only free range poultry, and only high quality beef.

Our physical training is overseen by Jake. Jake incorporates strength and conditioning methods to improve body composition to increase mobility and overall health for his clients.

We believe in clean living and a simple life. We love cooking delicious meals together and love working out together.

"We live what we do"



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

GambleAware - Free counselling services provided to individuals impacted by their own or a family member's problem gambling

NDIS Clinical Services - Positive behaviour support plans, counselling and assessments.

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 AOD counselling, psycho-education, care co-ordination and 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, supported independent living, coordination of supports, therapeutic supports and behaviour supports

Due to the 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:

Ph: 1800 372 826

E: contact@centacarenenw.com.au

www.centacarenenw.com.au

or find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/CentacareNENW



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