

# KEEPING PACE

## AUGUST 2020

### UPCOMING ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

During September and October PACE, in partnership with the Salisbury Library Service, will be hosting a series of online mental health and wellbeing workshops. Starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, the sessions will be held fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons from 1.30 – 3.00pm. We will deliver five sessions: Thriving in a crisis, Journey to recovery from anxiety, Journey to recovery from OCD, Journey to recovery from an eating disorder and Managing anxiety and depression. The sessions will be held online via Zoom and registrations will be taken through Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/online/salisbury-library/>

For more information about our presentations call us on 8303 6660 or email us at [pace@centacare.org.au](mailto:pace@centacare.org.au)

Welcome to the latest edition of Keeping PACE.

The last few months have been extremely challenging. As a society we've experienced some dramatic changes to the way we live and work, but for the most part we've been able to adjust to these changes, find new ways of doing things, and get on with life. This is certainly true for us here in PACE.

For most of the last three months our services have been limited to online and phone support. We continued to offer support groups for anxiety, OCD and eating disorders online via Zoom, and individual appointments via phone and Zoom. We also offered community presentations online, including a presentation we developed in response to the covid pandemic called Thriving in a crisis: Strategies for managing worry, stress and anxiety.

Over the last few weeks things have gradually started to get back to normal, not quite back to the way they were, but closer to normal than they were three months ago. We are back at the office, and we have resumed face to face appointments, groups and presentations, with covid safe procedures in place of course. It's great to be able to see our clients in person again, and I know that many of our clients are pleased that face to face services have resumed.

We don't know what will happen over the next few weeks or months, and the situation in other states is concerning, but whatever happens we will adjust to the situation we find ourselves in, and continue to support our clients.

Until next time, look after yourself.

Shane

Team Leader, PACE



## WORLD GRATITUDE DAY

Monday September 21 is World Gratitude Day. On World Gratitude Day we are encouraged to be thankful for what we have and show appreciation to the people who have a positive impact on our lives. Research has shown that gratitude is beneficial to our physical and mental health, and here in PACE we often talk about the benefits of expressing gratitude with our individual clients and in our support groups. It's easy to take things for granted, especially with everything that's going on at the moment, but we all have a lot to be thankful for, and it's important that we recognise and appreciate what we have.

For more information about World Gratitude Day and suggestions about how to express gratitude and show appreciation click on the following link:

<https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/world-gratitude-day/>

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## RISE IN DISORDERED EATING DUE TO COVID-19

A recent study conducted by the Butterfly Foundation has shown a sharp increase in the number of people seeking help for eating disorders since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. The dramatic changes to work, study and social activities have led to disordered eating in people who haven't experienced it before, and exacerbated the issue for many people whose eating was already disordered. The pandemic also impacted on the amount of support available, with many people unable to access the help they needed. Here in PACE, we recognised the potential impact on our clients when the pandemic started, and we tried to minimize the impact as much as possible. We converted our eating disorders and binge eating support groups to an online format, and offered online appointments, which meant that our clients continued to receive support at a time when they needed it the most.

To access an article which discusses the study click on the following link:

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/eating-disorders-spike-during-coronavirus-pandemic-study-finds/5d681bd8-b6c5-47f5-a0e3-7ca2b2b940dd#close>

## EMPOWERED

Centacare is partnering with the Port Adelaide Football Club to deliver a program aimed at teaching teenage girls about gender equity and women's rights. Offered to high schools and aimed at students in Year 10, the EMPOWERED program provides information about healthy relationships, and how to identify red flags that can lead to abusive behaviours. EMPOWERED will run alongside the Power to End Violence Against Women (PTEVAW) program, which helps boys recognise and stand up to toxic and disrespectful behaviours towards women and girls. Alex from the PACE Team will be co-facilitating the program with Caitlyn from the Reconnect service. Women who have experienced abuse have a higher risk of developing mental illness, so programs like EMPOWERED are extremely important because they provide information which can help young women recognise abuse and avoid unhealthy relationships.

**PACE Service - Centacare Catholic Family Services**

Rear of 78-80 St Vincent St Port Adelaide SA 5015

T: 8303 6660 | E: [pace@centacare.org.au](mailto:pace@centacare.org.au) | W: <http://pacesupport.org.au>

## NOTABLE QUOTE

“Remember, you have been criticising yourself for years and it hasn’t worked. Try approving of yourself and see what happens.” *Louise Hay*

Criticism can be extremely damaging. It can erode self-esteem, and lead to anxiety and depression, and problems in all areas of life. Yet many of us have a tendency to be highly critical of ourselves, and much harder on ourselves than we are on other people. So if criticism is so damaging, why do we criticise ourselves so much and how can we stop doing it?

As humans we are hardwired to look for negatives. It’s a phenomenon called the negativity bias. We have a natural tendency to see negatives more easily than positives, and to focus more on the negatives when we see them. For thousands of years the negativity bias helped to keep humans safe. People who were more aware of the threats and dangers in their environment were more likely to survive, so it was helpful to focus on the negatives. Although there aren’t as many dangers in our environment these days, the negativity bias can still be useful in some situations, but it can also create problems.

The tendency to recognise and focus on negatives more than positives means we are more likely to recognise our shortcomings and mistakes than our positive qualities and achievements, which makes it more likely that we will give ourselves criticism than praise. It also means that we are more likely to remember criticism than praise. The reality is that the more we hear something the more we tend to believe it, so the more we criticise ourselves, the more likely we are to develop negative beliefs about ourselves. For example, if you keep telling yourself that nobody likes you, you will start to believe that you are unlikeable, and if you keep telling yourself that you are stupid, you will start to believe that you are stupid, and this will have a huge impact on your self-esteem. So what can you do about it?

The simple answer is to give yourself less criticism and more praise. Now that’s a lot easier said than done when you’re used to criticising yourself, but it is possible, and here’s how you can do it. **Speak to yourself the way you would speak to someone you care about.** For example, if someone you care about made a mistake what would you say to them? Would you call them an idiot, and tell them they are stupid, hopeless or useless, or would you tell them that it’s just a mistake, that they’re not an idiot for making a mistake, that everybody makes mistakes, that they’re a competent, capable, intelligent person, and they’re being too hard on themselves. Or if someone you care about told you they thought they were ugly, what would you say to them? Would you agree with them, or would you tell them you think they are beautiful, and remind them of all the reasons why you think they are beautiful. If you wouldn’t say something to someone you care about, don’t say it to yourself.

The greatest influence on our happiness and success is the way we feel about ourselves, and we can change the way we feel about ourselves by being less critical, and more supportive and encouraging. Try to be aware of how you are speaking to yourself. Are you being too hard on yourself? Would you speak to someone you care about that way? If you can practice speaking to yourself the way you speak to the people you care about, with compassion, kindness and empathy, you will start to feel better about yourself, and every aspect of your life will improve.

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