

OAKE



TREE

HOLYOAKE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2 2013



I am so pleased that the Holyoake Alumni is now very much a part of our holistic service. It enables us to offer continued support to people who have completed our programs. I would like to thank all those who helped make this happen.

At Holyoake, we are inspired by clients who have the courage to seek help, and then transform their lives in remarkable ways. It is a privilege for us to be able to help empower them along the way. This issue of Oake Tree includes some inspiring testimonials and quotes.

This issue also focuses on our Women's Program which is designed specifically for women who would like to address the underlying issues related to their misuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

I hope you enjoy this issue; your feedback is always welcome.

Angie Paskevicius
CEO

The Holyoake Alumni gets off to a flying start



The Holyoake Alumni was launched on August 12, 2013 by Angie Paskevicius, CEO of Holyoake.

This memorable event included a very interesting workshop called 'Are you stressed or are you blooming?' presented by Tasha Broomhall.

The sense of anticipation was evident as the attendees gathered to celebrate the launch event. The concept of the Holyoake Alumni started in response to requests from our clients. A common theme in feedback surveys was that our clients were keen to stay connected to Holyoake and to other people with similar life experiences.

In her opening address, Angie welcomed guests and thanked them for trusting Holyoake to help change their lives for the better. "We are gathered here today to applaud your courage and determination" she said "the Holyoake Alumni is a welcome space for you to stay connected and to inspire others with your journeys of self-discovery."

Tasha then began her workshop on managing stress which seems to be so much a part of our modern, fast-paced lifestyle.

She said stress can be a positive energy if we learn to manage it effectively. Among other solutions, she suggested a practical 3 step process to keep stress under control:

- 1. Check it:** Identify what is causing the stress.
- 2. Change it:** Think about what you can do to change the situation. If there is, make a plan and take action. If not, move to step 3.
- 3. Chuck it:** Get rid of the worry and focus on what you can do.

Following this inaugural presentation, we organised a DRUMBEAT workshop in September, and a Mindfulness workshop in October. The next presentation on Emotional Intelligence is scheduled for November 11, 6-8pm. It will be presented by Fran Berry, an experienced and very engaging presenter.

We will be organising many more sessions, events and presentations. If you have not yet registered to become a member, you are welcome to do so. Please call 9416 4444 or email alumni@holyoake.org.au

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"I started the program tired, lonely, lost,
angry and feeling flat.

Slowly I learnt to feel feelings and not to block,
deny or repress them.

Now I feel more whole. I know myself better.

I feel more present and alive.

For the first time I felt someone understood me
and my story."

- Kaz

"Thanks to Holyoake,
I got my children
back in my care
100%."

- Steph*

"Thanks to Holyoake for
recognising that alcohol and
drug issues don't just affect
users, and for offering
programs for family and
friends of users."

Leonie*

"My relationships
with my wife
and family
have improved
considerably and
my awareness of
myself."

- Graeme*

"The support of the
group is really important.
Knowing that you are
not alone and feeling that
you're not judged -
really helpful."

- Paul*

Emerging from the shadows of mental illness

People who experience mental illness often speak about living life in the shadows. When the gloom becomes unbearable, alcohol and/or drugs are often misused as a coping mechanism.

At Holyoake, we have always acknowledged the link, and offer holistic programs to address these co-occurring issues. Tom* experienced the benefits of this approach as he describes his journey...

"I have lived with depression most of my life, and was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder in 1998. My life has been punctuated with a deep sense of loss, abuse and misfortune. I would hide behind alcohol and drugs when things got out of hand.

It all came to a head when my friends noticed a change in me, and my attitude towards them. I became very demanding

and self-absorbed. This led me to drink more, use more cannabis and gamble.

Realising I needed professional help, I spoke to my Occupational Therapist who recommended Holyoake.

It has been an amazing learning experience. My attitude has changed from rejection to acceptance. I discovered that I can control my habits rather than being controlled by them. I honestly believed I was my own worst enemy for most of my life. I realised that I was turning to alcohol and drugs to escape, not to cope with or face my problems. I felt a sense of freedom as I opened up to my Counsellor about my life, the abuse I had experienced, and the abuse I had inflicted on others.

My Counsellor helped me realise that the shame and guilt I felt for events in my life were just holding me back. Opening about everything made them less overwhelming.



I started to feel more in control and more aware of my destructive behaviour. I now see my recovery as an ongoing process, with a combination of the right medications and counselling. I see each day as a new beginning, a challenge for me to face my demons and emotions.

I am sharing my story because it might help others. If you have mental health and substance abuse issues, I suggest you open up about it, recognise there is a problem, and seek help. It could be the beginning of a new life."

From armed robbery to true freedom

Holyoake offers several prison and justice programs, including Pathways, and Drug & Alcohol Through-care Service (DATS). Jim* experienced the life-changing power of these programs as he recounts his story:

"My story begins with a turbulent childhood. My parents divorced when I was five and my Mum was left to fend for five children in the home. Then came the step-dad – a violent alcoholic who terrorised us all for many years.

I was a misfit at school. I had no friends, and felt worthless, angry, fearful, with no self-confidence. I learnt to put up fronts and barriers to hide myself and my situation from everyone.

As I grew older, I continued to suppress my inner thoughts and emotions to pretend I was someone I wasn't. I felt like a fraud

and this added to my stress. I began to drink alcohol excessively to feel something other than fear, anxiety and stress.

At this time I looked successful to everyone else - I had a wife, child, house and good job. But I was a mess inside. When it all got too much, I threw in the towel. I took up drugs in addition to alcohol and eventually ended up in prison convicted of armed robbery in 2011.

I first encountered Holyoake in 2012 when I was offered a place in a prison program called Pathways. I loved it. I put everything I had into it because what they presented made sense. I felt encouraged and optimistic for the first time. I began the discovery of the inner me and began confronting my childhood trauma for the first time.

The facilitators were very supportive even though the program was so challenging.

Without Pathways, I would not have started this journey of self-discovery. It led me to DATS counselling which I started in prison and have continued in the community since my release on parole.

The DATS approach is extremely positive, uplifting and safe. My Counsellor somehow allowed me to see the real me, a person with thoughts and feelings of my own. I now have hope and a true sense of direction. My Counsellor then encouraged me to start specialist counselling at Holyoake. I am now being counselled by a very skilled and switched on therapist who I feel confident will support me through to the end my journey.

I have come so far in the past 18 months with Holyoake. The experience has been life saving and life changing. I now believe that I am a man who is seeing the world through different eyes. I feel free."

Programs@Holyoake

We offer a range of programs not just for people with substance use issues, but for their partners and significant others as well because evidence indicates that an average of 5 people are affected by 1 person's dependency. If you've already experienced the benefits of our programs, perhaps you would like to refer someone else?

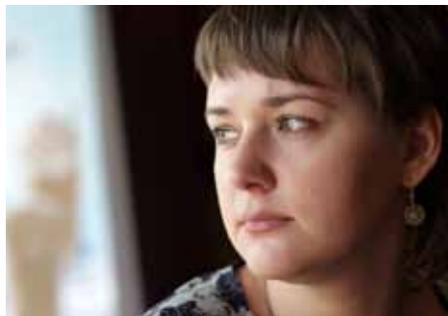
Women's Program

Holyoake offers a program especially for women who are affected by the problematic use of alcohol and/or other drugs. The Women's Program welcomes women who have varying levels of substance use, and may want to reduce or stop their dependency but are unsure how to do this.

The Program includes presentations as well as individual counselling and enriching group work. Participants are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for making positive change in their lives. The groups are held in a safe and supportive environment where women feel a sense of connectedness. Past participants have said that they no longer "feel they are the only one" in their struggles.

Women attending the program will gain insight about the underlying issues that may be contributing to their current substance misuse. They are encouraged to examine their own beliefs and behaviours, and explore effective skills and strategies to overcome their dependency.

The program covers a range of relevant topics such as self-esteem, grief and loss, relationships, guilt and shame, stress and emotions. It also explores more practical aspects like the process of dependency, communication, boundaries, self-responsibility, making changes and relapse prevention.



Participants often report feeling empowered and acquiring skills to help them move forward in their lives.

Many women experience some levels of guilt, shame or remorse about their substance use. The Women's Program helps them to move through their shame and to recognise that choices are something they make, and not defining factors of who they are. This insight helps the process of positive change.

Holyoake offers a safe, confidential and caring environment. Our experienced Counsellors give women the opportunity to share their experiences without being judged and support them through individual challenges.

Attending the Women's Program is often just the beginning of a life changing experience. As one Counsellor said "It is a privilege to be a part of these women's journeys. The strength and commitment they show is both courageous and heart-warming".

For more information on any of our programs please go to www.holyoake.org.au

Men's Program

Women's Program

Parent's Program

Relationships in Focus

Childhood in Perspective (for adults)

Couples Counselling

Young Adult's Program

Adolescent Program

Young People's Program

Art and Play Program

Prison & Justice Programs

Building Resilience Through Play

OAKE TREE SUBSCRIPTION

If you would like free issues of our newsletter for yourself and anyone else please

[click here](#)

and send us names and contact details.

We reach out to over 4000 people affected by alcohol and drug issues every year. You can help us continue our mission by including Holyoake in your Will. For more information please call Angie Paskevicius, CEO on 08 9416 4444 or email apaskevicius@holyoake.org.au