

# OAKE



# TREE

HOLYOAKE NEWSLETTER **ISSUE 1 2020**



We are living in strange times which seem unreal in so many ways. However, we can choose to focus on the dark cloud, or look to the silver lining.

I prefer to be optimistic, and so does Holyoake as an organisation.

As I look back at the past few months, I feel grateful that we all came together to overcome the many challenges. Our primary aim was to ensure the wellbeing of our clients and our staff.

In a very short period of time we set up phone and video counselling to ensure continuity of our services. We completed all the arrangements for our staff to work at home and to communicate regularly via Microsoft Teams. We also developed and launched our new DRUMBEAT Online program.

The sad reality is that the pandemic has had an enormous impact on Australia's mental health. It is important that we support each other through these unprecedented times.

Rest assured that Holyoake is here to support you. If you or someone you care about needs help, please reach out.

Stay safe and well.

**Angie Paskevicius**  
 CEO

## COVID-19. A true test of Resilience.

Coronavirus has impacted our lives in ways we could not have imagined only a few months ago. We sincerely hope you are keeping safe and well.

While the focus has been on physical health, let's not forget about our mental health as well. A recent study revealed that the number of people showing symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression has risen between 13% and 21%<sup>1</sup>. Another report indicates that Australians are drinking more alcohol during the pandemic<sup>2</sup>.

At Holyoake, we responded quickly to the emerging crisis. Our primary aim was to support people through these challenging times. While our offices had to be closed, we continued to reach out with phone and video counselling services. We also supported our staff with regular updates, working from home arrangements, and online contact via Microsoft Teams.

While all our DRUMBEAT facilitator training workshops in Australia and the USA had to be cancelled, we moved swiftly to develop and launch our new DRUMBEAT Online program. It has already proved to be effective, with excellent take up.

All this would not have been possible without our agile management team and Board, responsive staff, the trust of the community, and support from our funders and the government. Thank you.

Now as we ease back into the "next normal", please remember Holyoake is here to support you. Here are some practical tips from the Black Dog Institute to help you through this phase:

- **Take it slowly.** Simple things like grocery shopping or driving a car, or spending time with friends might feel strange. Take note of how you feel and consider speaking to your GP if feelings of anxiety persist or worsen.

- **Rebuild your relationships.** It's been a while since you've physically seen your friends and family. Spend some time together processing the experience, rebuilding bonds and supporting one another.

- **Look for opportunities.** The Government is offering subsidised undergraduate and postgraduate certificate courses. This could be an opportunity to enhance your current skillset or to retrain in a new field.

- **Seek help early.** Feelings of anxiety, difficult sleeping, appetite changes, irritability and crying bouts are all signs you may need some support. Speak to your GP or download this free app: <https://bit.ly/2OLaZxb>



- **Reflect on your experience.** Think about whether the lockdown experience could help you make positive changes. Make a list of new habits you would like to embrace and start implementing them.

- **Remember the advice.** Wash your hands regularly, keep a safe distance from others and keep up with the rules as they change so you know what you can and cannot do.

Australia has done relatively well through the pandemic, and we can continue to do so by being resilient as individuals and as a nation. Please visit <https://www.australia.gov.au/> for the latest updates and advice.

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/2DWuDUC>   <sup>2</sup> <https://bit.ly/2OIVVMS>

*"The Art and Play Program is so helpful for parents to get the connection back with their children. I now have my son living with me full time. So grateful." – Rachel*

*"At Holyoake I found great comfort in realising that we are not alone in this journey. By sharing our stories with other parents in the group, we were lightening our individual burdens and learning from each other." – Mel*

*"I have had some relapses, but Holyoake has always been there to support me without judging me. On bad days, I call them or go in for individual counselling which helps immensely." – Anne*

*"The counsellor at Holyoake was very kind and patient. She listened to my story and really understood my situation and the trouble drug use was causing my whole family." – Darel*

*"I truly thank Holyoake for helping me and giving me the tools to help myself. I also thank them for helping my mother through this incredibly hard and sensitive time." – Tim*

## My way of coping with life

No matter how I tried, I couldn't shake off the feelings of being defective, unlovable and not good enough. Alcohol was my easy way out... it helped to numb the pain for short periods of time.

Very soon I was drinking way more than the recommended two standard drinks a day. It was affecting not just my health but my relationships too.

I knew my drinking was getting serious when my kids told me they were worried it was going to give me cancer. The ads they saw on TV had an impact on them and it made them look at me with open eyes.

It was then that I decided that I had to stop for the sake of my kids.

I started looking around and heard about a Women's Program at

Holyoake. Even though I was a bit hesitant, I was comforted by the fact that that program was only for women.

Looking back now, I am so grateful that I reached out for help. The Counsellor at Holyoake was so welcoming and I did not feel judged at all.

I learnt about self-forgiveness and self-compassion. I began to value myself and to appreciate all the good things in my life. I was good enough, and didn't have to drink myself silly to feel better.

The work we did together in the Women's Program allowed us to see the good in ourselves, and it enabled us to feel valued. I got so much from hearing other women tell their stories as I realised I was not alone and how we are all trying to cope with what life throws at us. In supporting

one another we learnt that we are all worthy of love. I learnt that I am not a bad person after all.

This discovery led to my recovery from alcohol and has been key to helping me become a better mother to my kids. My biggest fear has always been that they would end up sad like me one day. I hope that, with all the hard work I am doing on myself, I am a better role model for them now.



## Turning back from the point of no return

I had reached a dead end with no hope in sight. Alcohol and drugs had brought me to this point and I was ready to give up.

The only thing that stopped me from pulling the plug was my family. I knew they still cared about me – why I'm not sure, but they did! My Dad understood me because he knew what it felt like... he had been there too many years ago. He suggested Holyoake to keep me strong and on track.

It was the best thing I did because these guys really had my back. They didn't judge me, but just worked with me to get over my problems.

Slowly my mind began to clear up. I didn't feel like I had to have the next fix to keep me going. It wasn't all easy and I did mess up, but my family and the Holyoake mob kept encouraging me.

It's been four years since I turned back from that dead end. I never thought my life would change so much. I now have a beautiful kid with my amazing



partner and I've reconnected with my family. I feel good, I have a good job. But there's more...

Yes, I can't believe I did this, but I actually worked with Holyoake to help others with my story. Holyoake runs a meth awareness program in organisations and they asked me if I would come along to share my story. I was really scared at first, but then felt good about helping other people to learn from my experience. It helped me build my confidence as well.

I lost my job three years ago because of my bad choices. Now the same company has given me a second chance and I am so grateful. Life is good and I won't make the same mistakes again.

If you or anyone you know feels beaten down by alcohol and drugs, please don't give up. I believe there is no such thing as a hopeless case. You can always turn back with a little help from family, friends and great places like Holyoake.

# Programs@Holyoake



Alcohol and drug issues affect not just individuals, but their families and friends as well. This is why Holyoake offers a range of customised programs for people of all ages who are impacted directly and indirectly. So if you or someone you care about needs help, please contact us for confidential counselling and support.

## A choice of in-person, phone and video counselling

A few months ago when a pandemic lockdown seemed possible, we were concerned about the wellbeing of our clients. Determined to continue our counselling services, we pulled out all the stops to set up phone and video counselling.

It wasn't easy because we had limited time to address not just the technical aspects, but privacy and confidentiality issues as well. Thanks to the stellar efforts of our project team and our IT consultants, we managed to set it up successfully.

This proved to be very beneficial because when we did close our offices, we were able to continue supporting our clients. Our counsellors and clients have adapted to this situation very well. One of our counsellors said: "It has been particularly useful to enable us to continue services. In addition, some clients have engaged even more during phone sessions – maybe due to being more relaxed in their own setting."

As we ease into the post lockdown phase, we will continue to offer our clients a choice of counselling options – in-person, phone and video counselling. They can choose any one, or a combination of these options.

This is another example of Holyoake's commitment to quality services and client wellbeing. If you or someone you care about needs help, please call 08-94164444 or email [clientservices@holyoake.org.au](mailto:clientservices@holyoake.org.au)



- For more information on any of our programs please go to [www.holyoake.org.au](http://www.holyoake.org.au)
- Men's Program
  - Women's Program
  - Parent's Program
  - Relationships in Focus
  - Childhood in Perspective (for adults)
  - Couples Counselling
  - Child Parent Relationship Training
  - Adolescent Program
  - Young People's Program
  - Attachment Art and Play Program
  - Prison & Justice Programs
  - Integrated Support Team

## Holyoake welcomes feedback from clients

Please let us know about the quality of our programs, suggestions for improvement, additional services we could provide, and anything else. Call 9416 4444, or email [clientservices@holyoake.org.au](mailto:clientservices@holyoake.org.au) or visit our website.

**We reach out to thousands of people affected by alcohol and drug issues. 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](mailto:apaskevicius@holyoake.org.au)**

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