

OAKE



TREE

HOLYOAKE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 2021



The last twelve months have been quite a rollercoaster of emotions, uncertainty and apprehension. I look back with a sense of relief, but also gratitude that we have come through so far.

At Holyoake, we are doing our best to support as many people as possible. We are grateful to our current funding bodies for their support, as well as Lotterywest who provided much-needed assistance via the COVID-19 Relief Fund.

I would also like to acknowledge our Covid Response Team who guided Holyoake through the pandemic, and our staff, clients and the community for your support.

While the physical health threat eases, mental wellness concerns are rising rapidly. A recent study revealed that the number of people showing symptoms of anxiety, stress and depression has risen by up to 21%. Another report indicates that Australians have been drinking more alcohol through the pandemic.

If you need help and support with alcohol, other drugs or related mental wellness issues, please reach out to any of our offices in Victoria Park, Midland, Northam, Narrogin and Merredin. We also offer phone and video counselling in addition to in-person counselling.

On behalf of Holyoake, I wish you well.

Angie Paskevicius
CEO

The Pandemic and Silver Linings

It's fair to say that COVID-19 has been an unprecedented global crisis. We have all been affected in some shape or form. We hope you are safe and well.

Like most difficult situations in life, we can choose to focus on the dark cloud, or look to the silver lining.

At Holyoake, we did everything possible to stay positive through the crisis. Our main priority was the safety and wellbeing of our clients and staff.

As soon as the situation emerged as a red flag, we established an internal Covid Response Team to monitor and respond to the rapidly evolving scenario.

Early on we realised that any lockdown would disrupt our counselling services. So in March 2020, we decided to stay ahead of the curve by establishing confidential phone and video counselling options. This proved to be crucial because when the lockdown was eventually enforced in April, we continued to offer our services via phone and video counselling. In fact, the pandemic increased the need for support due to rising levels of stress and mental wellbeing issues. We also provided regular updates via our website and social media channels.

We expanded our Information Technology capability to enable all staff to work seamlessly and efficiently from home. We maintained staff morale by organising regular online team chats, and an online Team Week. Sessions included a Q&A session hosted by Aboriginal staff, prizes for learning new skills during the pandemic, a forum to explore each other's interests, wellbeing tips during a crisis, and more.

COVID-19 had a major impact on our DRUMBEAT program as all our training workshops across Australia had to be cancelled. Rather than suspending this program temporarily, we decided to take it online. Within just four weeks, we produced over 130 videos in house, developed related materials, and launched DRUMBEAT Online in May 2020. This proved to be visionary, as this online program has taken off



successfully - participants can now complete the program anytime, anywhere from the convenience of their own digital devices.

Holyoake had secured funding from Lotterywest in 2019 to renovate our main office in Victoria Park; construction was scheduled to start in October 2020. When the pandemic hit, we consulted with the project managers and decided to start the project in April during the lockdown when no staff were on the premises. As a result, the renovation was completed in October 2020.

Looking back, we are most pleased about the fact that we were able to support our clients and staff right through the crisis. Rather than panic, we responded calmly and quickly with appropriate and innovative solutions. We could not have achieved this without our Covid Response Team, staff, clients, funders, and the community. Thank you.

We continue to offer phone and video counselling in addition to in-person counselling. All our offices in Victoria Park, Midland, Northam, Narrogin and Merredin are operating as usual. So if you or anyone you care about is impacted by alcohol, other drugs or related mental wellness issues, please do not hesitate to reach out.

You can expect confidential, non-judgemental and free counselling in a safe and caring environment. For more details, please call 08-94164444, email clientservices@holyoake.org.au or visit www.holyoake.org.au

Stay safe and well.

"I feel safe at Holyoake.
I feel respected and my
children really enjoy
coming here."

Michelle

"I feel comfortable coming
here after initially being very
anxious. The counsellors
are open-minded, non-
judgemental, accepting and
welcoming."

Andy

"Holyoake's phone
counselling was so helpful
especially during the
lockdown when I wasn't
doing well at all."

Peter

"Really appreciate
the follow up
calls which keep
me on track and
motivated not to
give up."

Ray

"Holyoake provided
me a safe, secure,
open environment in
which I could just be
my real self."

Rachel

My journey from darkness to light

My palms still go sweaty when I think back to that terrifying experience three decades ago. I can see the flames roaring through my house as I tried to escape the unbearable heat.

By some miracle, my courageous wife managed to get me out... but just barely. Then I lost consciousness, and when I came around I was tucked up in a hospital bed with my entire body wrapped in bandages.

I could scarcely believe when my wife then told me I had sustained 3rd degree burns to 35% of my body. She sobbed as she whispered that doctors had declared me medically dead... but somehow I had clung to life.

What followed next was a blur as my life came crashing down. For ten years I went on a path

of self-destruction - unable to deal with my situation. I got addicted to alcohol, drugs and food. I stumbled from one day to the next feeling completely lost and confused.

As they say "The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step". My first step was to turn to Holyoake. At the time one of my drinking buddies suggested we have a bet and do a program at Holyoake. Still in denial, I knew deep down that my life was a mess. On the outside I looked ok as a high performing drunk; I had a good business, big house, nice car... but inside was a different story.

Holyoake helped me confront the reality. The counselling I received helped me to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I completed the program twice and while I did slip back to my

old ways occasionally, I was well on the road to recovery thanks to Holyoake's care and guidance.

I have come a long way since. I now harness the strength of my life experiences to help others. As a yoga teacher, personal trainer and nutritionist, I support others to make the most of life. I am at peace, in love with life and the people who surround me.

If you are reading this now and feel life is not quite what you'd like it to be, don't be too harsh on yourself. Remember there is always hope – don't give up. Perhaps someone you care about may be going through a rough time. Places like Holyoake are always there to offer support with their vast experience. So reach out, and trust that life always offers a second chance.



A young mum who had a life-changing experience at Holyoake, shares her feelings about the day she discovered her son's drug secret. She hopes this will help other parents who may be confronted with a similar situation.

I will continue to support him and hope this experience will have a positive effect on his future.

When I realised my teenager was experimenting with drugs

I was lying on the sofa at about 10pm watching TV with my husband and my daughter. My 15 year old son was at his friend's house for a sleepover.

My phone rang and I saw it was my son. He sounded very serious on the other end and just asked if I could pick him up. I jumped in the car and drove straight there.

His friend's mother said my son had something he needed to tell me. As I entered, my son admitted that he brought some weed to the sleepover and they had been caught smoking in the garden.

His friend's mother was very upset, but we ended up having a grown-up conversation

about the risks we all take when we allow ourselves to be altered by substances. I shared that I had overcome addiction myself.

We talked about how the urge to escape from ourselves and our environment is in most of us. I asked the boys about other ways they could escape without taking on too much risk. They both said that they love the buzz of mountain biking.

It was midnight by the time I took my son home, after he apologised to the family. But the conversation continued when we got home. He told me he felt so much better for unburdening himself and that he really didn't want to continue down that path. He was

grateful to me for listening and for not getting angry about it.

The next day he woke up with remorse but grateful for our support. We grounded him for the next six weeks, and he lost the privilege of his phone for a while. He agreed that he needed to learn from this experience.

My son is my first born and as such I am on a huge learning curve. The bottom line is that I dread the thought of my son suffering in the way I did with addiction. I want to help him find more positive strategies to help him deal with life's challenges rather than reaching for a substance to make him feel happy.

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.

DRUMBEAT Online



The pandemic had a severe impact on our DRUMBEAT program... all our facilitator training workshops in Australia and the USA had to be cancelled. It was a crisis and we had to make a decision: suspend the program, or pivot.

We decided to pivot by taking the program online. In a short span of just four weeks, we developed, produced and launched DRUMBEAT Online in May 2020.

This was an exciting leap forward because it expanded program access in regional and remote areas, as well as worldwide. It now offers professionals the freedom to become DRUMBEAT Facilitators by completing the program anytime, anywhere from the convenience of their digital devices.

It proved to be the right decision as many people across Australia and around the world decided to learn the program while they were in lockdown.

DRUMBEAT Online includes 130 instructional videos, a training manual, trainer examples of all drumming activities, easy to work through modules, mentoring from Master Trainers, a peer support forum, assessment marking, and provisional accreditation. After completing the program, these professionals join an international community of over 7,000 DRUMBEAT Facilitators – many of whom are achieving positive social outcomes in their communities.

DRUMBEAT, the world's leading therapeutic drumming program, is based on documented research that identifies key issues related to health and social outcomes. It has been proven to reduce anxiety, calm the nervous system, improve emotional regulation, support emotional wellbeing, improve relationships, build resilience, and more.

For more details, please visit: <https://holyoake.org.au/drumbeat/drumbeat-online/>

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

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 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

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