

OAKE



TREE

HOLYOAKE NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2 2021



Welcome to this issue of Oake Tree. I hope you are keeping safe and well.

The symbolism of moving from Winter to Spring is so relevant in our current context. The uncertainty of the pandemic is clearing up slowly as the country gets vaccinated. We look to the future with hope and optimism.

I came across this interesting quote by David Weatherford *"When faced with a challenge, look for a way, not a way out"*. I believe this reflects Holyoake's approach to overcoming significant challenges over the past year. The main article of this issue explains how we worked together to ensure the wellbeing of our clients, staff, and stakeholders. It has been a confronting, but empowering journey.

The pandemic has impacted all our lives in some shape or form. If you or someone you care about needs help with alcohol, other drugs, or related mental wellness issues, please reach out. We are doing our best to support as many people as possible, but our capacity is stretched. Perhaps you could consider helping us to help others – read more about our new Holyoake eCard initiative on page 4.

As always, the life changing journeys of our clients inspire us and others who may be hesitant to seek help. We are so grateful to the two individuals who have shared their experiences on page 3.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Oake Tree.

Angie Paskevicius
CEO

Innovating to meet evolving needs

Innovation is an integral part of Holyoake's approach to provide services that best meet the needs of the community. This guided our actions as we responded to the challenges of the pandemic and ensured the wellbeing of our clients, staff and stakeholders. We are most proud about providing uninterrupted services during a time when they were needed even more.

It has been a busy period as our teams developed innovative solutions to address the changing needs of individuals and families in need. The following are some of our initiatives:

- Responding to increasing stressful situations within families impacted by substance misuse, we developed a new **Family Therapy Program** to offer holistic support. Thanks to a Lotterywest grant, this program is now helping families to identify unhelpful patterns, behaviours and communication styles, and offers a safe space for family members to work together to support one another as a unit.
- Our Prevention Team in the Wheatbelt developed a **Within REACH social media campaign** to link young people to reliable information, support and guidance to make positive and healthy life choices. This includes alcohol and illicit drug use, mental, physical and sexual health, social and emotional wellbeing, personal and online safety, life skills, and career information. It is available on Facebook and Instagram @ withinreachwheatbelt.
- In a major setback, all our DRUMBEAT program training workshops in Australia and the USA were cancelled due to travel restrictions. The team responded by developing and launching **DRUMBEAT Online**. This digital option has been transformative as people around the world can now access this evidence-based program anytime and from anywhere. <https://bit.ly/3mSwX20>
- Our team in Midland collaborated with **Indigo Junction** to support Aboriginal people impacted by substance use issues in the north-east metro area. Thanks to funding



- from the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA), we were able to co-locate one of our counsellors at Indigo Junction's Karnary Resource Centre in Midland.
- We received funding from the Mental Health Commission to implement the **Active Recovery Teams (ART) program** in partnership with Primary Mental Health Services in Midland, Bentley, Royal Perth Hospital, and in Northam. This new program aims to better support people with mental health, alcohol and other drug support needs when they are discharged from emergency departments.
- Our Prevention Team in the Wheatbelt collaborated with WAPHA to develop the **Wheatbelt Professionals Wellbeing Portal**. This has become a useful self-care and workplace wellbeing resource hub for professionals (local government, social services, education, mental health and alcohol and other drug sector, and first responders). <https://bit.ly/3p55pJw>

We look back at this unprecedented experience with gratitude as we came through the storm stronger and more resilient. This would not have been possible without effective leadership, excellent teamwork, innovative thinking, a clear plan, and the support of our clients, staff, funders, stakeholders, and the wider community. Thank you.

"I learnt about self-forgiveness and self-compassion. I began to value myself and to appreciate all the good things in my life. I now feel that I am good enough, and don't need to drink myself silly to feel better."

Alan

"The group program gave me an opportunity to vent my true feelings and what was happening in my life. I learnt so much about self-awareness, self-care, boundaries, triggers and to love myself more."

Bernie

"I learnt more about myself and the importance of things like boundaries, choices, self-responsibility and my own values. The difference between caring and care taking."

Reece

"I no longer try to control or fix things that are really not my business. I am stronger, calmer and happier. I am seeing a new relationship develop with my son."

Rita

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

Lenny

Learning to let go in a caring, supportive way



Like any parent, I was concerned when my daughter didn't seem to be her usual bubbly self. At first, I thought it was just hormones and growing pains, but was soon heart-broken to learn that it was drugs.

I felt so helpless as she spiralled down and shut me out. I was desperate to help her but just didn't know how. I felt ashamed and tried to keep it a secret, but a neighbour heard about the situation and was kind enough to chat to me. She shared her own experience and how Holyoake had helped her.

When things got worse, I decided to give Holyoake a go. At first, I was unsure of what their Parent's Program would involve. I expected I would learn about addictions and the emotions and behaviour that comes with it. I quickly came to realise that I would be learning so much more. More about my daughter and her addiction... but unexpectedly, more about myself!

It is an excellent program, professionally and caringly delivered. I wish I had become aware of it a couple of years earlier!

On reflection, the light bulb moment for me was in setting personal boundaries. I knew I needed to set them for my own health and wellbeing but wasn't sure of how to go about it and whether or not it was 'selfish'. But when I learned the benefits of setting these boundaries for myself in regard to my daughter, I felt empowered.

It became very clear to me that stepping back, and letting go of care taking, does not mean to stop caring. When I did step back, I noticed some positive changes all around. I also realised that this was giving my daughter a safe space to be without judgement.

I'm very happy to say that we as a family are moving forward. It's not to say that there will not be set backs, but now I feel that I have the knowledge and understanding to work through future challenges in a caring and supportive way.

I cannot give enough praise to the team at Holyoake – thank you so much.

Taking back responsibility for my life

I've always wanted a close relationship with my mum. We love each other and I continue to want a relationship with her. However, her alcohol use has played a big part in creating difficulties in our relationship

Mum started drinking quite heavily and she was like a different person. She would get angry, throw things around, speak rudely, and try to manipulate me. This made me anxious, and I didn't know what to do. I thought about moving out when I lived with her but felt guilty about leaving when she needed support.

At the time I was seeing a counsellor through my mental health care plan. They advised me to contact Holyoake as they support those who are affected by other people's alcohol problems. I wasn't sure because mum would not agree to go for counselling, but I contacted Holyoake anyway. To my surprise, I was told that they provide counselling at no charge.

I didn't know what to expect, but the counsellor made me feel very welcome and comfortable.

For the first time, I felt someone really heard me and understood what I was going through. He assured me that my feelings were quite normal and suggested some practical skills to manage my anxiety.

After a few individual counselling sessions, the counsellor advised me to join Holyoake's Relationships in Focus program. He said this program was especially for people like me whose relationships are affected by alcohol and other drugs.

I'm so glad I took his advice because the Relationships in Focus program helped me to understand the importance of setting boundaries in relationships. I learnt new mindfulness skills to help me stay calm during stressful times. But the best part is that I didn't feel alone because others in the group were in the same boat. This helped me feel less guilty about my own feelings and to look after my own wellbeing as well.

All this actually improved the relationship with my mum. Now I stay calm and don't react when she is angry. I've set personal boundaries and mum knows how I will respond if she crosses a line. I am now less judgemental about her choices and more accepting of the real person that she is.

I am so grateful to Holyoake for making such a huge difference in my life. The knowledge and strategies have been so helpful... I would be in a really bad place without their support. The fact that there are no fees allows people like me who don't earn much to get the help we need. I also want to thank my counsellor for his knowledge and calm, supportive manner. He has done heaps in many ways, and I will always be grateful.

I'm sharing my story because there may be others like me out there. If you are struggling, please reach out for help. It could help you in ways that you didn't think were possible.

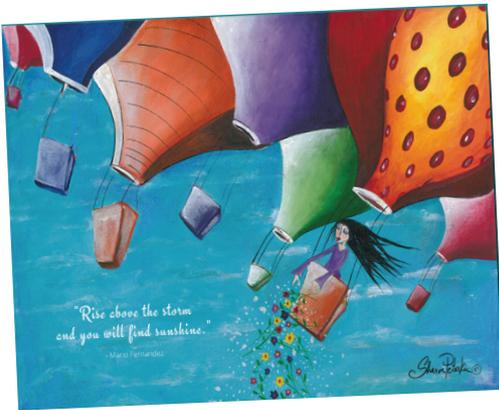
Programs@Holyoake



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.

Holyoake eCards

A unique way to connect with and support each other



as birthdays, anniversaries, celebrations, expressing gratitude, sorrow, and sympathy, etc.

These eCards are also a part of Holyoake's fundraising campaign to support our free counselling programs and services. They offer multiple advantages:

- All cover images are copies of original artworks by local artists.
- Each eCard is a wish AND a gift because the sender's donation is acknowledged within the eCard.
- Every donation over \$2 is tax-deductible.
- The eCards can be customised with personal messages.

There are over 200 eCards to choose from, and we will add new designs from more artists periodically. Click here for more details: <https://holyoake.org.au/holyoake-ecards/>

Social distancing, lockdowns, restrictions and uncertainly have had an adverse impact on mental wellness. Holyoake is reaching out to as many people as possible, but our capacity is stretched.

It is in this context that we have introduced Holyoake eCards to encourage people to connect with and support each other more often. There's a range of eCards to check in on someone, to brighten someone's day, or to offer support. The collection includes eCards for various purposes such

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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