

## WE ARE HERE



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*Momentum is published by*

THE LEARNING EXCHANGE

Editor: Ian Johnson



# How Your Body Language Can Empower You

The way we hold ourselves, the positions we assume during our day, also impact our **thoughts and feelings**, even our physiology. [Amy Cuddy](#), Ph.D., professor and researcher at Harvard Business School, gives an inspiring [TED talk](#), the second most viewed talk in TED's history, about how **our body postures influence our emotional health far more than we think**. A simple tweak from a passive stance to a power pose can change our hormone levels and can transform us into a more confident person, improving our chances for success.

### Power Postures Versus Powerless Postures

In her talk, Cuddy discusses specific nonverbal expressions of power and dominance that we are born knowing. They are universal and intuitive to all creatures in the animal kingdom: gestures of expanding and opening up, stretching out and making yourself big. One of her colleagues, [Jessica Tracy, Ph.D.](#) showed in [her studies](#) that people who are congenitally blind throw their arms up in a V shape, chin lifted, when they win a physical competition, just as athletes do who have perfect sight. Also universal and intuitive are gestures of powerless. We close up, slouch, make ourselves small.

Cuddy studied the minds of people who consistently displayed power poses and those who exhibited powerless poses. The power people were more assertive, confident, and optimistic. They were also able to think more abstractly and were willing to take risks. In primate hierarchies, high-power alpha males have high **testosterone** and low **cortisol**.

*continued on page 4>>>>>*

## Fake it Until You *Become* It!

On a dark, grey, Winter's day with the temperature at just 8 degrees it was very warming to get a message from a girl scout group from sunny California telling us how much they appreciated the content on a page on our website. To quote them:- **'..... the other mothers and I want to encourage the girls to be able to talk to somebody if they, or somebody they know, needs help; we have decided to talk to them about mental health. While doing research, my troop found your resources to be so helpful while they are working very hard on earning their Healthy Living badges! Thanks so much!'**

We had a lot of positive feedback on the adversity theme from our **Winter** edition newsletter and peoples' appreciation that they can choose to *'move towards'* what they fear, rather than just reacting away from it and in the process perhaps *have their fear diminish* in size and importance.

**Spring** is a time of renewal and fresh growth, personally this is the season I love the best but, for reasons I can't quite explain, I feel a pang of loss for Winter. Perhaps it's just no longer having an 'excuse' for not doing very much at all. You may not experience *any glad anticipation* with Spring, you may in fact feel a dread sense that you, or perhaps others in your life, will look to you with a renewed expectation that you will now be able 'do' 'or' 'be' something now that the weather is improving?

Our lead article therefore is **'Fake it Until You Become It'** - is the idea that *by just going through the motions* you can become the change that *you want* to achieve. Of course you will *need to know what change that is*. At the deeper levels of our consciousness however there seems to be an uncritical acceptance of things. Thus, if you tell yourself that you're a superhero it's only the most conscious part of your mind that knows you're not. Not yet anyhow! So, the belief is that if you behave as a confident, successful and yes, happy, person, your sub-conscious will accept and act on your behaviours.

Other articles to draw your attention to include Fiona's piece on page 3 **'How to Cope with Life and not Push Love Away'** and a short article on page 10 **'Forgiving Your Life.'** You might also want to check out psychologist Lee Suckling's opinion on page 5 that **'Trigger Warnings aren't preventative mental health care'** - important because such opinion is counter to the prevailing view about the need to provide such warnings.

*Ian Johnson, Editor*

## Change— galvanising our lives into a meaningful direction

Over the past issues, a constant theme – strangely enough – has been the effect of change on our lives, and that it can often be a galvanising feature in shifting our lives into a meaningful direction.

This has a personal resonance for me at this time, as it will be this last piece that I write as General Manager of MHAPS since I will be retiring towards the end of the year. As of 30<sup>th</sup> October, the MHAPS Board, staff and I are delighted to announce that the reins of this fine organisation will be handed over to **Fiona Clapham Howard**, our current Peer Support team manager

Along with a different face, this role has been retitled by our MHAPS Board from General Manager to **Service Director / Kaihautū**. In Te Ao Maori, te Kaihautū is the person who stands at the prow of the waka and maintains the timing for the paddlers. This is a beautiful analogy for the role of the main leader in a peer support organisation where everyone contributes significantly to its mahi and responsibilities, and everyone has mana.

For me it has been a huge privilege and honour to take MHAPS from a merger of three organisations into a one-stop-shop for people looking for recovery from their illness, distress and/or addiction. All of us at MHAPS have understanding and insight into the challenges and emotional roller coaster of this experience and do our very best to form a purposeful relationship with peers/clients who come to us for direction and support. During my time here, I have met some amazing people who have undergone personal distress, illness and/or addiction and have made the choice to make difficult changes in their lives with courage and purpose.

For some people, past trauma and ongoing challenges can take them to crisis point, where despite suicidal thoughts and self-harming actions, they do not reach the criteria for specialist mental health care. Many folk in this position fortunately find their way to MHAPS where we offer the best we can. But crisis often happens at night or weekends, and more needs to be done.

To this end, MHAPS and Awareness have joined with Purapura Whetu Trust and Supporting Families in Mental Illness to look at developing a peer run Crisis Centre in Christchurch. We are currently at the Feasibility study stage where consultants, Dru and Talia Norris, will be talking with people about their needs of such a service and also to potential referrers. If you would like to be part of a focus group, please email me at [generalmanager@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:generalmanager@mhaps.org.nz) or text 0274165816. There will be a progress report in the December issue of **Momentum**, together with my final sign-off. Till then, I hope the Spring will bring you hope and energy for your ongoing well-being.

**Sue Ricketts, General Manager**

## How to cope with life and not push love away

As the days start to warm up and get longer again, I find myself grateful for having made it through another winter. Winter does feel like a test of my survival skills – psychologically, emotionally, it's a tough time for me. Every winter, the cold and the dark seem to remind me of some of those "long dark nights of the soul" that I've endured, too many times, in my five decades of life so far.

From what I can see, I'm not alone in this. Many of the peers that find their way to MHAPS (along with most of the staff) are survivors of adverse experiences in some form or another – most often, the kind that have occurred in our early years, as we have grown from children into young adulthood. These difficulties and traumas are all the more damaging for happening in our formative years, and in the context of relationships with people we could reasonably have expected to protect us, to keep us safe, and to nurture us.

Humans are resilient, and we have all found ways to cope. We find ways to soothe our distress, to numb the psychological pain, and to distract from our emotional hurts. We find ways to stand up for ourselves, to protect us from being hurt again. But often, as we become older, our ways of coping can start to cause problems. They become, for instance, the drinking problem; the eating disorder; or the unwillingness to trust others that protects us, but keeps us isolated and lonely.

In the last issue of *Momentum*, we introduced the Harvard Study. You can read a little more about this long-term study below. It has allowed researchers to draw some significant conclusions about what makes for a happy or successful life. Overwhelmingly, they found that connections – good relationships – are the key to happiness and health.

At MHAPS, as we all continue to work through our own recovery journeys, we believe everyone is capable of not just surviving, not just coping with those early hurts and traumas, but working towards overcoming them to make positive life connections. The Intentional Peer Support approach we use continues to challenge us but also to provide some wonderful experiences of genuine connection.

It's never too late. And spring is a wonderful time to try a new approach.



*Fiona Clapham Howard, Peer Support Manager*

### **Challenges — and the Perspective They Give You — Can Make You Happier**

As Professor Vaillant (director of the Harvard Study from 1972-2004) puts it, there are two pillars of happiness. "One is love," he writes. "The other is finding a way of coping with life that does not push love away."

Coping mechanisms — "the capacity to make gold out of shit," as Vaillant puts it — have a significant effect on social support and overall well-being. The secret is replacing a single-minded focus on one's own emotional oscillations and problems, with mature coping defences, Vaillant explains, citing Mother Teresa and Beethoven as examples.

"Mother Teresa had a perfectly terrible childhood, and her inner spiritual life was very painful," says Vaillant. "But she had a highly successful life by caring about other people."

Creative expression is another way to productively deal with challenges and achieve meaning and well-being. "The secret of Beethoven being able to cope with misery through his art was when he wrote 'Ode to Joy,'" says Vaillant. "Beethoven was able to make connection with his music."

Read the full article online at: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/11/how-this-harvard-psycholo\\_n\\_3727229.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/11/how-this-harvard-psycholo_n_3727229.html)

>>>>>> *continued from front page*



Interestingly enough, if another alpha needs to take over, that primate's testosterone goes up significantly and his cortisol drops. She found the same hormone levels in powerful and effective leaders. Cuddy explains that the study is proof that there is something to the aphorism, "Fake it til you make it." She says in her TED talk.

When I tell people about this, that our bodies change our minds and our minds can change our behaviour, and our behaviour can change our outcomes, they say to me, "It feels fake." Right? So I said, fake it till you make it. It's not me. I don't want to get there and then still feel like a fraud. I don't want to feel like an impostor. I don't want to get there only to feel like I'm not supposed to be here. Then she tells a powerful story that places all of her research into context.

## On Being an Imposter

When she was 19 year old, Cuddy was in a serious car accident and woke up in a head injury rehab ward. She had to withdraw from college and her IQ dropped by two standard deviations. Having based her identity on being a gifted child and intellectual pursuits, she was crushed. She felt entirely powerless. "I worked and worked, and I got lucky, and worked, and got lucky, and worked," she said. She ended up at Princeton and felt like an imposter. The night before her first-year talk, she was afraid of being "found out." Cuddy informed her advisor, Susan Fiske, that she was quitting. Susan didn't let her off the hook so easily. She gave her a Tony Robbins pep talk: You're going to stay, and this is what you're going to do. You are going to fake it. You're going to do every talk that you ever get asked to do. You're just going to do it and do it and do it, even if you're terrified and just paralyzed and having an out-of-body experience, until you have this moment where you say, "Oh my gosh, I'm doing it. Like, I have become this. I am actually doing this." Cuddy followed her instructions. She faked it for five years in grad school, then moved to North-western, then arrived at Harvard. **Eventually she didn't feel like an imposter anymore.**

## Fake It 'Til You Become It

The Harvard social scientist has used her personal tragedy to transform lives. Her closing words will inspire you not only to stand up straighter and open up your chest, but to never stop trying and to always have the courage to be yourself: 'And so I want to say to you, don't fake it till you make it. **Fake it till you become it.** Do it enough until you actually become it and internalize it. Tiny tweaks can lead to big changes. So, this is two minutes. Two minutes, two minutes, two minutes. Before you go into the next stressful evaluative situation, for two minutes, try doing this, in the elevator, in a bathroom stall, at your desk behind closed doors. That's what you want to do. Configure your brain to cope the best in that situation. Get your testosterone up. Get your cortisol down. Don't leave that situation feeling like, oh, I didn't show them who I am. Leave that situation feeling like, **I really feel like I got to say who I am and show who I am.**

***'Fake it till you become it. Do it enough until you actually become it and internalise it.'***

# Trigger warnings aren't preventative mental health care

LEE SUCKLING: Last updated 13:00, May 8 2017



**OPINION:** The phrase "trigger warning" has become a buzzword of late. Last week, the producers of *Shortland Street* apologised that its earthquake-centric episode [didn't include a warning](#) and may have triggered Kiwis who had traumatic seismic experiences of their own. The week prior, New Zealand's chief censor re-classified *13 Reasons Why* and forced Netflix to [place new trigger warnings](#) at the start of every episode.

I don't deny trigger warnings can sometimes be useful. They tell you (or your parents) what to expect, and give you a chance to remove yourself.

The requirement for them, however, only illustrates a more important issue: if you need trigger warnings, you might have a form of post-traumatic stress and should also seek help with your trauma.

In many American universities, trigger warnings are given at the start of lectures where sensitive subject matter will be discussed or shown through imagery or video. Usually, said issues involve the likes of rape and assault. The rationale behind this is to give students who may have been affected by these traumas in the past a chance to leave the lecture, in order to avoid being "triggered".

Unfortunately, real life doesn't come with trigger warnings. It's like a game of Whack-A-Mole: by avoiding potentially harmful material in one place, you may end up waiting for it to pop up in another.

Triggering content isn't just something that makes a person mildly uncomfortable, upset, or offended. It's defined as a hypersensitive reaction to something that could bring flashbacks and intrusive thoughts of past traumatic experiences. It can be as painful the thousandth time around as it was the first.

Soldiers who go to war, for example, are prone to triggers (e.g. concerning loud noises, blasts, fire, certain sights, swift movements etc.). Defence forces the world over recognise the propensity for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to develop and – in the case of proactive militaries such as New Zealand's – swiftly move to address every individual's triggers when they return home to ensure they don't follow them for the rest of their lives.

The support networks for civilians aren't nearly as vigilant, which is why we see victims of sexual assault, violence, self-harm, addiction, and psychological and psychosocial disorders without the mental health care they need.

It's also vital for trauma sufferers and their supporters to understand that triggers aren't normally as explicit and Hollywood thinks they are. As a rape victim, for example, you don't have to watch a violent simulated rape on television (as seen in *13 Reasons Why*) to be triggered.

You may be triggered by much more abstract things, such as seeing a colour that you now identify with the clothing you were wearing when you were sexually assaulted, or a smell of a particular deodorant that you now associate with that traumatic event. Sometimes all it takes to be triggered is reading a single word in a newspaper article that takes you straight back to a trauma – and all its pain subsequently re-ensues.

We mustn't forget that the scope of what qualifies as trauma isn't easy to define. Yes, trauma can be assault, an earthquake, or a tragic accident. It can also be everything from a health problem to bullying, experiences of misogyny, racism, religious intolerance or homophobia to an emotionally abusive relationship.

It also pays to note that trauma is not black and white: what affects one person will not necessarily affect another who has been through the same situation.

Dr Michael J. McNally, director of clinical training at the psychology department at Harvard University, calls trigger warnings "counter-therapeutic". "They encourage avoidance of reminders of trauma, and avoidance maintains PTSD," he says.

This is why trigger warnings preceding some emotionally-sensitive content are so problematic. Again, because the real world doesn't contain trigger warnings you may merely be deflecting and avoiding trauma. Thus, as a former PTSD sufferer myself, I do not consider trigger warnings effective preventative mental health care.

The solution is one I can attest to from my own personal experience. "[We] need to prioritise mental health [treatment] and obtain evidence-based, cognitive-behavioural therapies that will help overcome PTSD," Dr McNally says.

Put simply, you can't get over trauma by avoiding it. "These therapies involve gradual, systematic exposure to traumatic memories until [a person's] capacity to trigger distress diminishes."

*'.....real life doesn't come with trigger warnings. It's like a game of 'Whack-A-Mole.....'*

- Stuff

# Just 10 Minutes of Meditation May Help Anxious People Focus

BY KATE HOROWITZ, MAY 1, 2017

Researchers say just 10 minutes a day of mindfulness meditation can help reduce distracting thoughts for people with anxiety. They published their findings in the journal *Consciousness and Cognition*. "Mind wandering accounts for nearly half of any person's daily stream of consciousness," psychologist Mengran Xu of the University of Waterloo said in a statement: - *'That's a lot of distraction, and it's not just idle time. Wandering minds make it hard to work and learn. They also make mistakes. Some of those, like mailing an envelope with no letter inside, are relatively harmless. Others, like drifting into another lane of traffic, can be dangerous and even deadly.'* Conditions like anxiety and depression can often make it even harder to concentrate. Some previous studies had found that mindfulness meditation can improve focus, but others were less conclusive. And nobody had yet investigated if the same was true for people with anxiety. Xu and his colleagues recruited 82 college students, all of whom were prone to anxiety. They divided the students into two groups. Half of the participants listened to a 10-minute audio lesson on mindful breathing and meditation. The other half, the control group, listened to the first eight paragraphs of *The Hobbit*. (both '*The Hobbit*' and the specific meditation lesson used here have been part of numerous other studies on mindfulness—in part because they seem to work, and in part because standardized procedures are a good step toward valid results.) Next, all the students were asked to take a brief test on the computer. Every so often throughout the test, a dialog box opened with a "thought probe," asking the participant what they were thinking, and how motivated they were to keep thinking about it. The students' test results and their answers to the thought probes suggested that even a mini meditation has a lot to offer. "Our results indicate that mindfulness training may have protective effects on mind wandering for anxious individuals," Xu said. "We also found that meditation practice appears to help anxious people to shift their attention from their own internal worries to the present-moment external world, which enables better focus on a task at hand." More research is needed to confirm these findings. This experiment was small, and relied on participants' own reports of their thoughts and feelings. Also, all the participants were college students, and their results might not necessarily translate to the general population. Also: It's true that mindfulness can be hugely helpful, but we should note that it is not a cure—for anxiety nor any other illness. If anxiety is making it hard for you to focus or function, it's time to talk to your doctor. You can meditate in the waiting room.

*'.....meditation appears to help anxious people to shift their attention from their own internal worries to the present-moment external world.....'*

Find this article here: - <http://mentalfloss.com/article/500507/just-10-minutes-meditation-may-help-anxious-people-focus>

## Exercise versus caffeine - which is your best ally to fight fatigue?

POSTED JUNE 08, 2017: [Monique Tello, MD, MPH](#), Contributing Editor, Harvard Health



Chronic lack of sleep makes it hard to focus on a task. As if this didn't make complete logical sense, multiple research studies have shown that sleep deprivation has about the same effect on our cognition and coordination as a few alcoholic beverages.

### What do you do when you need to concentrate, but you're tired?

Many of us reach for a cup of coffee, or a soda. Mountains of solid research have shown us that caffeine (in doses ranging between 30 and 300 milligrams) improves attention, alertness, reaction time, and mood, especially when we're tired. An average cup of brewed coffee contains between 80 and 100 milligrams of caffeine; a soda, between 30 and 60.

But exercise works too. This is also well-studied. Even a short bout of any cardiovascular exercise wakes us up, speeds mental processes, and enhances memory storage and retrieval, regardless of our fitness or fatigue levels.

So, when it's late afternoon and I'm struggling with charting or finishing one of these pieces, what should I do: exercise a bit, or go for coffee?

One recent (and very small) study compared these two wake-up methods. This well-conducted study used healthy but chronically sleep-deprived volunteers to compare three interventions: caffeine, stair-climbing, and placebo. They found that just 10 minutes of stair-climbing boosted self-reported levels of energy far more than a moderate dose of caffeine (50 mg). However, this was a very small study — only 18 out of 90 healthy, college-aged women met all the criteria and were willing to participate.

*'.....caffeine is associated with both good and bad health outcomes, exercise is good for everything.....'*

### Digging deeper: Exercise offers more long-term benefits

While the findings make a whole lot of sense, I went to the existing piles of literature for more information.

Interestingly, another study looked at the effects of either exercise alone or exercise plus caffeine on cognitive tasks, and found that (perhaps predictably) exercise *plus* caffeine had the greater benefit.

Caffeine (in the form of coffee) has been well-studied, and regular intake is associated with lower risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity, but may increase cholesterol. It may be protective against certain types of dementia and cancer, but has been associated with bone loss and rheumatoid arthritis. Basically, there are many benefits, but there seem to be some risks as well.

But there are multiple studies suggesting that exercise has multiple long-lasting positive effects on physical fitness and function, cognition, mood, and behaviour in just about all populations studied, in all ages, fitness levels, and regardless of baseline cognitive function. Some of the greatest benefits have been seen in older patients, as well as patients at risk for or diagnosed with dementia.

The take-home message? Caffeine can provide a boost in alertness and energy levels that may help you to think faster and better, for a while. But even a short burst of exercise can do the same, maybe more, and for longer. In addition, while caffeine is associated with both good and bad health outcomes, **exercise is good for everything.**

## Calming Herbs to Soothe Anxiety

[Therese Borchard April 15, 2017](#)

Healing herbs have played a part in both traditional and non-traditional forms of medicine dating back at least 5000 years. They have been used by physicians and healers of various cultures and civilizations throughout time to soothe the nervous system and protect the body from stress and anxiety. Whether you have a full-blown [anxiety disorder](#) or just fleeting moments of unease, you might benefit from experimenting with calming herbs — taken either as a supplement, consumed in tea, or used in [aromatherapy](#).

In the last few months, I have combined a few of the herbs below in my tea when my anxiety peaks throughout the day and also as a sleep aid before I go to bed at night. I am not advocating that you use herbs to replace anxiety medication. However, they can be a nice supplement to what you're already taking. For mild symptoms, they may be all you need. **Please consult with your doctor to make sure they don't interfere with any medications and are safe for you to use.**

**Get the full article with all the herbs here:** - <http://thereseborchard.com/2017/04/15/5-calming-herbs-to-soothe-anxiety/>

# Can probiotics help treat depression and anxiety?

POSTED JULY 26, 2017, 10:30 AM [Athos Bousvaros, MD](#), Harvard Health



There is a lot of interest right now in the human microbiome (the populations of bacteria that live in various parts of the body, including the intestine, skin, and lungs). We now know that there are approximately 10 times as many bacterial cells as human cells in the body. The vast majority of these bacterial cells are in the intestinal tract, and they serve many purposes, including digesting foods, manufacturing certain vitamins (for example, vitamin K), and regulating our immune system. Researchers are actively studying whether changes in intestinal bacteria can increase the risk of chronic illnesses, such as obesity or inflammatory bowel disease.

## Is the way to your brain through your stomach?

Interest is also developing in the so-called “brain-gut axis.” It has been theorized that changes in intestinal bacteria may play a role in neuropsychiatric conditions such as anxiety or depression. The intestine has its own separate nervous system, and generates many of the same neurotransmitters (including acetylcholine and serotonin) that the brain generates. These neurotransmitters are very important in promoting gut motility, and too much or too little of them may result in constipation or diarrhoea. Similarly, we believe that the brain and the gut can talk to each other. Therefore, it is possible that anxiety and depression may trigger abdominal pain or other GI symptoms. It is also possible that gastrointestinal conditions such as chronic abdominal pain or constipation might also result in anxiety or depression.

*‘..... possible that anxiety and depression may trigger abdominal pain or other GI symptoms.....’*

## Can probiotics treat chronic conditions (physical and mental)?

If, in theory, bacteria have a role in these chronic conditions, perhaps changing the intestinal bacteria by adding probiotics (“good bacteria”) might help treat chronic illnesses. Probiotics have been utilized widely in countries like China and Japan for decades, primarily in the form of fermented milk. In addition, there are a number of animal studies that suggest probiotics may be helpful for conditions like diarrhoea or colitis. Unfortunately, probiotics have not yet been shown to treat much human disease.

A [recent article](#) in *Annals of General Psychiatry* reviewed the currently available medical literature on using probiotics to treat anxiety and depression. The doctors identified 10 studies that were well done (in other words blinded and placebo-controlled), and looked at each study in depth. All of these studies had relatively small numbers of patients, ranging as from as few as 42 to as many as 124. The results of these studies were mixed; some suggested that there may be mild benefits of taking probiotics if you have anxiety or depression while other studies showed no benefit. Overall, the authors concluded “the clinical effects of probiotics on mental health have yet to be studied comprehensively.”

## The bottom line

While it is tempting to hope that probiotics may be used to treat anxiety or depression, at this point there are no compelling data that suggest a true benefit. Since most probiotics are relatively safe, taking them for this reason probably falls into the “doesn’t hurt, and might help” category. However, probiotics are probably not a substitute for standard care such as cognitive behavioural therapy, or FDA-approved drugs to treat depression or anxiety. More research as needed in the future, that should try to identify which strains of bacteria are the most effective and the best dose of bacteria to take to treat these conditions.

**Related Information:** [Coping with Anxiety and Stress Disorders](#)

## Mental Health Awareness Week 9–15 OCTOBER 2017 ‘NATURE IS KEY’

Mental Health Awareness Week is endorsed by the World Federation for Mental Health. In New Zealand it's celebrated with World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

For details of how you or your organisation can get involved : <https://www.mhaw.nz/>

## OCD Awareness Week OCTOBER 8TH—14TH 2017

OCD Awareness Week is an international effort each year to raise awareness and understanding about obsessive compulsive disorder and related disorders to help more people to get timely access to appropriate and effective help. The Week is celebrated with OCD screening days, lectures, conferences, fundraisers and online Q&As.

Full information: <https://iocdf.org/programs/ocdweek/>



## Looking after the 'top paddock'



From **Nine To Noon**, 10:06 am on 27 July 2017

Doug and Wendy Avery came close to losing everything a few years ago. The farmers from

Grassmere, in Marlborough, were hammered by drought for eight long years.

As the farm dried up, so did the bank account, and eventually Doug's hopes and ability to function under a cloud of depression.

Nowadays, he is the man behind the Resilient Farmer website, which has been instrumental in helping the rural community's mental health.

He tells Kathryn Ryan about the struggle and the realisation so many others were in the same boat.

People struggling with depression can learn to be happy, he says.

"I started out trying to save my own poor soul.

"I started to realise there was a lot of other people in this place.

"We actually have to start being comfortable in our own skins and so there's a lot of energy at the moment going into 'what's the government not doing?' and 'what is this organisation, DHBs, or whatever, what are they not doing?'

"This is an attitudinal change that we need in this country and that is driven from inside individual human beings."

Some people don't like the word 'resilience' but they may be people without resilience and a fundamental part of strengthening a family, or a community, involved building resilience when times were good, Doug says.

He often heard men saying they hadn't told their partners, they'd excluded others from their lives, and were left isolated and alone, drinking a lot.

Tell your partner. Their reaction was often unexpected, he says.....

Listen to the full interview at: -

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoonoo/audio/201852578/looking-after-the-top-paddock>

## Benefits Of Drinking Warm Water & Lemon

### 1. Boosts you're immune system

Lemons are high in Vitamin C and potassium. Vitamin C is great for fighting colds and potassium stimulates brain & nerve function and helps control blood pressure.

### 2. Balances pH

Lemons are an incredibly alkaline food, believe it or not. Yes, they are acidic on their own, but inside our bodies they're alkaline (the citric acid does not create acidity in the body once metabolized). As you wellness warriors know, an alkaline body is really the key to good health.

### 3. Helps with weight loss

Lemons are high in pectin fibre, which helps fight hunger cravings. It also has been shown that people who maintain a more alkaline diet lose weight faster. And, my experience is that when I start the day off right, it's easier to make the best choices for myself the rest of the day.

### 4. Aids digestion

The warm water serves to stimulate the gastrointestinal tract and peristalsis—the waves of muscle contractions within the intestinal walls that keep things moving. Lemons and limes are also high in minerals and vitamins and help loosen ama, or toxins, in the digestive tract.

### 5. Acts as a gentle, natural diuretic

Lemon juice helps flush out unwanted materials because lemons increase the rate of urination in the body. Toxins are, therefore, released at a faster rate which helps keep your urinary tract healthy.

### 6. Clears skin

The vitamin C helps decrease wrinkles and blemishes. Lemon water purges toxins from the blood which helps keep skin clear as well.

### 7. Hydrates the lymph system

This cup of goodness helps start the day on a hydrated note, which helps prevent dehydration (obviously) and adrenal fatigue. When your body is dehydrated, or deeply dehydrated (adrenal fatigue) it can't perform all of it's proper functions, which leads to toxic build-up, stress, constipation, and the list goes on.

***Adopting just this one practice of drinking a cup of warm water with lemon in the morning for a month can radically alter your experience of the day. Don't be surprised if you begin to view mornings in a new light.***

## LINKS and ARTICLES IN BRIEF

## Forgiving our life

JULY 19, 2017 KARL DUFFY

A lot of us find it hard to extend real kindness towards ourselves. Our default position is that we are much more critical of ourselves – and how our life history has developed – than we are of others.

*'And if we forgive life for not being what we told it to be, or expected, or wished, or longed for it to be, we forgive ourselves for not being what we might have been also.'*

**And then we can be what we are, which is boundless**

John Tarrant, *The Zenosaurus Course in Koans*

## Your brain on chocolate

AUGUST 16, 2017, 10:30 AM: [Robert H. Shmerling, MD](#), Faculty Editor, Harvard Health Publications

Did you know that places where chocolate consumption is highest have the most Nobel Prize recipients? It's true, at least according to a [2012 study](#) published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Of course, that could be a coincidence. But is it possible that intelligence or other measures of high brain function are actually improved by the consumption of chocolate? A new review summarizes the evidence and concludes with a resounding "maybe."

### Keeping your brain healthy

When it comes to preserving and improving brain function, let's face it: we need all the help we can get. With age, diseases that cause dementia, such as stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and Parkinson's disease, become more common. And since we have an aging population, predictions are that dementia will become much more common in the near future. Yet despite decades of research, there are no highly effective treatments for dementia.

As for preventive measures, the best recommendations are those your doctor would make anyway, such as regular exercise, choosing a healthy diet, maintaining a normal blood pressure, not smoking, and drinking only in moderation. "Brain exercise" (such as challenging math problems or word games) and a variety of supplements are unproven for long-term preservation of brain function or prevention of cognitive decline. While some studies suggest that antioxidants, fish oil, stimulants such as caffeine, or other specific foods may help improve brain function or prevent dementia, these benefits are hard to prove and studies have been inconclusive at best.....

Read the full article at: - <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/your-brain-on-chocolate-2017081612179>

## Do you experience 'night dreads?'

There are certain worries that only seem to strike at night. Sarah Maber investigates the phenomenon that is 'night dreads', and finds out why they creep up on us and what we might do about it.

Lying in bed at 2.53am, flooded with anxiety, I doggedly focus on my breathing and try to stay calm – but numerous worries keep creeping through. Tonight, it's the hairline crack in the bathroom wall – is it a sign of subsidence? But it could just as easily be about the children's health (a small-hours panic about possible missed vaccinations or symptoms), my tax return (what if I get hit for thousands?) or friends (did I remember to reply to the I'm-getting-a-divorce text?).

By day, I deal with any concerns with a constantly updated to-do list. But at night, jerked from slumber and heart pounding, I catastrophise, my mind a maelstrom of worry.

The most recent [Great British Sleep survey](#) showed that one in three of us suffer from insomnia or other sleep disorders, and in a straw poll of my 30- and 40-something friends and colleagues, half of them confessed they were regularly jolted from sleep by worry.....

Get the full article here or ask us for a copy: -

<https://www.psychologies.co.uk/do-you-experience-night-dreads>

## NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

We all have times when we need to talk. A new four-digit phone and text number has officially launched to help anyone who is going through a difficult time.

**1737 is a free service** run by Homecare Medical. It's a 24/7 one-stop helpline to a range of existing depression, alcohol and drug, and gambling hot-lines. Trained counsellors offer immediate support and refer those in mental distress to primary and secondary mental health services if needed.

If there is a wait period for mental health services, then 1737 counsellors can schedule follow-up counselling appointments to ensure no one has to go through a mental health problem alone.

The new helpline number is convenient and easy to remember, and we hope it will encourage anyone who needs to talk to reach out for help when they need it.

**Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand**

# NOTICES AND NEWS

**Can dancing improve your mental health?** Dance psychology is the study of dance and dancers from a scientific and psychological perspective. What we're trying to understand is what happens when people dance and why, we are looking at it from a healthcare perspective, which might suggest dancing is good for you. <http://www.news-medical.net/news/20170308/Can-dancing-improve-your-mental-health.aspx>

**UVA researchers use probiotic bacteria in yogurt to reverse depression symptoms**

Researchers at the University of Virginia School of Medicine have reversed depression symptoms in mice by feeding them Lactobacillus, a probiotic bacteria found in live-cultures yogurt.

<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20170309/UVA-researchers-use-probiotic-bacteria-in-yogurt-to-reverse-depression-symptoms.aspx>

**Mental Health Resources for Deaf Population** Were you aware that about 10% of the deaf population uses a mental health or addiction service, but less than 1% receive a service in their own language? The good news for Kiwis with a hearing disability is that there is now [depression.org.nz](http://depression.org.nz) information available in New Zealand Sign Language.

**Successful wellbeing campaign to roll out in Kaikoura and Hurunui** Mental health and wellbeing campaign **All Right?**, which was established after the Christchurch earthquakes, has been rolled out in Kaikoura and Hurunui to provide support following the 7.8 magnitude earthquake last November.

**Latest issue of Farmstrong out now!** Canterbury dairy farm contractor Nicole Jackson talks about the online fitness initiative she's developed to help female farmers get physically ready for calf rearing. You can also read about a comedy night put on for flood-affected farmers and check out a group of Hawke's Bay farmers who are rowing their way to wellbeing.

**People with mental health needs recover better in own communities** In this opinion piece, Pathways Health chief executive Sally Pitts-Brown argues that people with mental illness recover better in their own communities, and that communities are safer and healthier when they support each other and care for those in need.

**Te Reo Hāpai – The language of enrichment** (2017, June 26). Auckland: Te Pou.

A new Māori glossary not only provides translations for existing words, it's also created many new words in Māori for use in the mental health, addiction and disability sectors.



## Writers group

Are you a writer with personal experience of mental illness, distress or addiction?  
Want to meet with others and share your writing and get feedback?

**Come along to the mad poets society writers group! Free to attend!**

- 2nd September 1-3pm
- 7th October 1-3pm
- 4th November 1-3pm
- 9th December 1-3pm
- 2018 dates tbc



## PROGRAMMES and EVENTS UPDATE

### Wellness Recovery Action Plan

5 x two hour workshops  
starts Thursday October 12

If you're making good progress with your recovery and you want to lock in the gains you've made and provide for the possibility that you may need support in the future then you could consider doing a **WRAP** programme.

Talk to Carl or Hannah  
on (03) 365 9479 or email [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz)

### WHAT'S ON AT MHAPS?

As well as those programmes profiled here we offer a range of peer recovery groups, including the **Friday Group**, and weekly **Workshops for Wellbeing** that offer you an opportunity to try things.

For a copy of the current month's schedule: -  
<http://mentalhealthadvocacypeersupport.org/>

or email: - [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz) or  
phone (03) 377 9665 and ask for a copy.

### Themes

FREE talks on mental health and recovery topics

Every 4 weeks we have a subject matter specialist come and talk **about a mental health and recovery topic**. Whether this is for you, a friend or family or professional interest you're welcome to attend.

If you haven't been to **Themes** before please contact [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz) or phone (03) 365 9479 to register and get details of our venue, schedule for the year and times.

<http://mentalhealthadvocacypeersupport.org/our-services/programmes/>

### Mindfulness programme

Facilitator: Kathy Hughes:- 4 weeks, 7:00 – 8.30pm

Programme start date: - Thursday October 19th 2017

*'Tutor was excellent and her knowledge was very good.'*

*'Everything, the course was great.'*

To register for this programme or for a flyer, describing the course rationale, expected outcomes and details about the tutor please contact:

[reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz) or phone (03) 365 9479

### Do you experience moderate to high anxiety?



The next 11 week workshop-based **RecoveryWorks** programme begins **Wednesday October 4th 2017**. Workshop are four hours each plus there are two individual coaching sessions through the programme. There are *a few places* still available on this programme. Over nearly seven years most people who have participated in this programme have made successful and positive life changes.

You can pick up a flyer from our office, or by contacting us on (03) 365 9479 or [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz)

For more detailed programme information contact Ian on [lex-manager@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:lex-manager@mhaps.org.nz) or (03) 377 9665.



## Who Challenges You?

I had an interesting conversation the other day with some family members. They were discussing a mutual relative and complaining about how the person doesn't listen, is getting more titchy and still interrupts all the time. It made me think. What if I do the same things? Or different irritating things? How would I know?

It is a fact of life that for a person to feel they can give us constructive criticism they have to be very close. Our neighbour or work colleagues won't bother. If we have irritating habits like telling stories that are way too long or having to one-up a person with a more challenging story than theirs, they will just leave. They'll avoid having social contact with us. Only those we live with or have to keep a relationship with have a vested interest in having good, fair communication.

Don't confuse this with those in our life who feel a strong right to tell us what to do or think. I don't mean them. Avoiding people who work hard to make us feel bad is our right for self-care.

But... I live alone. Who challenges me? Who will tell me if I am being self-absorbed or forgetting the plight of the disadvantaged or swearing too much? If we want to keep being decent people who can form quality relationships we need to allow our friends to criticise us. We hope it will be done gently. We hope to be a big enough person to hear it and try to change. It is a safe bet though, that if we can't get quality feedback our circle of friends will shrink and isolation will become a factor in our lives.

So, of course, the internet. I found a few helpful things to aid our conversations: -

**The 'R.I.G.H.T' Way** *This method helps to structure the most essential parts to giving feedback.*

**R – Respectful:** *Show respect and people are more willing to listen to your feedback.*

**I – Issue Specific:** *Keep the feedback centred on the action not the person.*

**G – Goal Orientated:** *The aim of constructive feedback is to improve future communication; this is the goal to strive for when giving feedback.*

**H – Helpful:** *Use a helpful tone, to further express your intention of helping through feedback.*

**T – Timely:** *Give feedback in a timely manner when you have a better chance of making an impact.*

We can't expect people to work well with us if we don't offer the same support and respect. These guidelines could help us in all our communications. Let's be brave and open the possibility with all our close people for better relationships.

**Beth**

## Hello from Latnam 826

First I would like to send a fond farewell to my two volunteers Barbara and Gracie, Gracie who has been with Latnam since it first started as member staff and volunteer so thank you so much to the both of you. And I'm sure we'll see you back as members.

A big thankyou to the members who decided to put a fee of 50 cents at the start of the day for their drinks. So far the members have saved enough for a stereo and just had a new surface for the pool table.

Once again a big thank you to George and Janette from St. Luke's for bringing in yummy food on Fridays also Tony Gill for the biscuits.

Reminder for those who haven't got anything to do on a Monday Latnam is off site using the community hall at Mabel Howard. Lots of fun with pool table, darts and board games and I heard the drinks are free and hot chips.

Labour weekend we are having a pool comp and it's on the Sunday. Get your names in to us as places will fill quickly.

Finally a big thanks to my volunteers and student placements— you guys do a great job.

Cheers

**Wendy Hill**



# AWARENESS

## Canterbury Action on Mental Health and Addictions

Welcome to Spring! Since our last update leadership of Awareness has been taken on by an enthusiastic new executive committee, including some returning and some new members. We welcome Andri, Harris, Carol, Debbie, Anne and Maria to the exec, and Keryn as the new chair of Awareness for this year. With such a diverse and skilled group at the helm, the year ahead looks to be an exciting one.

While we are now secure in the leadership of Awareness, it's a different situation for the country. The national Election is approaching, fiercely contested, and this gives us an opportunity to bring mental health to the attention of politicians, advocate for systemic change, and vote for the people and parties who will best address the issues experienced by those of us with mental health or addiction experience.

Much of the media focus has been on resignations of party leaders and poll results, and it can be really hard to find information on what parties will actually do for our health and wellbeing. Awareness members have been looking in to this, and have the following resources to suggest checking out

- **policy.thespinoff.co.nz** is a website where you can look short quotes on parties policies, save policies you agree with and see a break down of which parties best match what you believe in for New Zealand
- **Madinaotearoa.nz** is an NZ blog site written by lots of different people about their experience with distress/mental illness/extreme states. Organisers at Mad In Aotearoa have surveyed political parties about mental health and have published their results here for you to read

Want to be more actively involved? Awareness has established a project group called the "Political Nudge Group" to be more involved in lobbying parties in the lead up to the election, and whoever forms the next government post-election. Anyone can join.

In other news, we have two more workshops scheduled for this year: "Introduction to Intentional Peer Support" and "The History of the Consumer Movement, and Activism for Today". If you would like to come along to one of these workshops, please get in touch by phone or email to register. Workshops are \$10 to attend or \$5 for those who are on a low income. We would love to have you along.

With Spring being here and the days warming up, we re-ignite the Mad Poets Society Open Mic Nights this month. Friday nights 7pm at Beat Street Café - 15th September, 20th October, and 10th November. A new development has been our Writers Group where people can come together to share their writing and get feedback from others. This meets monthly on the first Saturday of the month 1-3pm, if you'd like to come along, get in touch for venue details. Hope to see you at an Awareness event soon.

### The Next Meeting

**Monday 11th September 12.30—2.30 pm,**

**MHAPS Community Wellbeing Centre**

**at 826 Colombo St by Peterborough St**

All people who have mental health or addiction experience welcome.  
Afternoon tea provided

Phone 366 8288 for more information or come along on the day



Consumer-run  
mental health show  
Saturdays 1.00pm  
and Wednesdays  
10.30 am

2 Sep : 'A Personal Story'

9 Sep : 'Parenting and mental health' -pt. 1

16 Sep: 'Parenting and mental -health -pt .2

23 Sep: 'Karen's personal story'

30 Sep: Beth on 'Advanced Directives'

7 Oct : Yoga and mental health'

14 Oct : 'Peer support work'

Podcasts are available at: -

<http://plainsfm.org.nz/podcasts/programme/quiet-minds/>

If you have a recovery story or a service to promote give us a call at **366 8288** or email **gr.cas@mhaps.org.nz**

We apologise if, as a result of last minute changes the show played does not match this list.



## Help end discrimination against mental illness

Fighting mental illness stigma and discrimination might sound like the kind of thing you need super powers for. Luckily the things that work best are simple, so we can all help make a difference.

<http://taketheloadoff.nz/>

## OTHER SERVICES YOU CAN USE

Here are some other organisations that we suggest to our clients for services that we don't provide ourselves: -

**Jobconnect**—help to plan for and secure work

**Supporting Families**—helps you to support others who are struggling.

**MHERC**—books, DVD's, CD's and resources

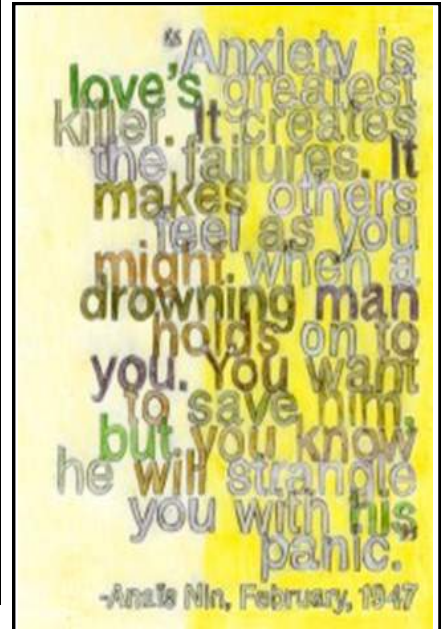
**Green Prescription** exercise and diet from GP

# Farewell

to our valued colleagues

**Barbara and Gracie** (Katrina) volunteers from Latnam 826 and

**Kat McAra** as a peer support worker. Kat will continue her work on MHAPS' social media.



visit our website and Facebook pages

[www.mhaps.org.nz](http://www.mhaps.org.nz)



Peer Support

Peer Advocacy

Peer Support groups

Consumer Participation

Latnam House programme

Recovery programmes

Information and Talks

Quiet Minds Radio

826 Colombo St.

PO Box 33 332, Barrington

CHRISTCHURCH 8244

365 9479; 0800 437 324

reception@mhaps.org.nz

www.mhaps.org.nz

## WE HAVE A LARGE LIBRARY OF BOOKS

### CD's and DVD'S!!

We have **98 books** on anxiety alone plus a further **30 DVDs** and **CDs**.

We also have a large number of resources for those experiencing depression, bipolar disorder and other mental health issues.

Make a time to come in and browse.

Email [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz) or phone **03 365 9479**.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

**Crisis Response** 364 0482;  
364 0640 after hours

**24 Hour Surgery** 365 7777

**Lifeline** 366 6743 or 0800 543 354

**Healthline** 0800 611 116

**Alcohol and Drug Helpline**

0800 787 797

**Youthline** 800 376 633

**Parentline** 381 1040

**Christchurch Women's Refuge**  
364 7306

**DISCLAIMER:** Please note that the information provided in this newsletter has *not always* been provided by a qualified health or mental health professional. Whilst MHAPS endeavour to ensure the reliability and accuracy of all information, this cannot be guaranteed. Any treatment or therapy decisions you take should not be based solely on information contained in this newsletter. It is important that you discuss first with your doctor, or other appropriately qualified health professional, any changes that may affect your health.

**FAMILY  
VIOLENCE  
IT'S NOT OK**

**IT IS  
OK TO ASK  
FOR  
HELP**

<http://www.areyouok.org.nz>



**Anxiety  
New Zealand**  
TRUST

## 24-Hour Hotline

If you are feeling anxious and need someone to talk to – wherever you are in New Zealand – you can phone our free 24 hour Anxiety Help Line.

**0800 ANXIETY** (0800 269 4389)



*"You boys who have to take your medications with food, now's the time."*

## OUR FUNDERS

*MHAPS acknowledges and thanks the following organisations for their continued and valued financial support*

**CANTERBURY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD (CDHB)**

**RATA FOUNDATION (Canterbury Community)**

Christchurch Casino; Christchurch City Council

CERT; Christine Taylor Foundation; David Ellison;

Hagley Community College; Lottery Grants Board; Lion Foundation

Pub Charities; Southern Trust; Todd Foundation; Working Together More Fund

**IF UNDELIVERED PLEASE RETURN TO: -**

**PO Box 33 332, CHRISTCHURCH 8244**

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter or our regular updates 'What's on at MHAPS' please contact Shelly on email: [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz) or (03) 365 9479