

FaPMI newsletter



Welcome to the Winter Edition of our 2015 Newsletter. It has been varied weather, with some glimmers of sunshine, but now we are starting to wear coats and scarves and carry our umbrellas each day! Keep warm!

School Resource Booklet

The FaPMI team have been working with schools in Term 1 to inform them about a new booklet that is available to schools. The purpose of the booklet is to inform school staff about ways that they can support families whom have a child attending school to participate and stay connected with their school communities. It gives the staff additional ideas about how to assist children and parents if they need it. If you would like the school your child attends to receive one, please let us know and we will send them some copies of the booklet in the mail.

Book Review

We currently have Kelsey, a final year Social Work student, assisting us with our newsletter editions this year. She has written some of the articles for this edition of the newsletter and has reviewed the book 'My Happy Sad Mummy'. If you are interested in providing us with a book review, please contact us, and we will provide you with the book for you and your child to read. You will receive a book as a gift for providing us with the review.

Other information

We thought those of you with young children may be interested in some information about Separation Anxiety - which is a normal stage of development. We also have some school holiday activity ideas provided by Kelsey. Free dental service information is also provided.

Programs

During Term 3, Eastern Health will be running the following:

- Martial Arts as Therapy (MAT) at Croydon on Thursdays from 4-5pm starting 23 July
- CHAMPS After School Program at Blackburn on Wednesdays from 4-5.30pm starting 29 July

If you are interested in any of these programs please contact Bronwyn Sanders on 0408 291 580.

The FaPMI Team

Becca Allchin & Kirsty Jungwirth FaPMI Coordinators

Bronwyn Sanders FaPMI Program Support Worker (9 hours per week)

Kelsey (Volunteer assisting with Newsletter)

Eastern Health Adult Mental Health Program

Murnong Clinic, 4 Bona Street, Ringwood East 3135

Ph: 9871 3988

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June 2015 Contents:

1. Welcome
2. School holiday ideas
3. Book Review
- 4-5. What is Separation Anxiety?
5. Public dental care
6. Spotlight on a Service
7. Kara's Story
8. Gillian's Rainbow Bridge
9. Girls with Positive Attitude
10. Parent Information Forum
11. Fridays@headspace

Would you like to contribute to this newsletter?

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SCHOOL HOLIDAY IDEAS

ACTIVITIES AT HOME

With the winter school holidays coming up, we are going to continue to have more rainy days inside. Keeping the kids occupied can become difficult if they become restless at having to be stuck inside all day, so we've come up with some ideas of activities to do around the house to keep both you and the kids entertained.

BUILD YOUR OWN VEGGIE GARDEN!

This is a great way to keep kids engaged and to teach them patience. It is a great project for any time of the year, but getting it started in the school holidays can be a productive way to spend your time together. All you need are three or four small planter boxes (depending on what you want to grow), some soil and your seeds. You can get these from some \$2 shops but you may have to go to a garden shop for the soil.

1. In each planter box, pour in your soil about 2cm from the top.
2. Dig a small hole (don't be afraid to get a little dirty) and drop your seeds before covering it up again.
3. Don't forget to label each box with the veggie that is in it. Eg 'Carrots', 'Tomatoes', or 'Peas'. Use whichever veggies you want, but make sure to read the back of the seeds packet to know when they will bloom properly.
4. Make sure that you have drainage holes on the bottom of the boxes and a drainage plate under the box or pot. This will help to prevent the veggies from being over watered.
5. Once you've grown your veggies, you can have some cooking lessons with your home grown veggies.

OTHER IDEAS

- Play a game of hide and seek.
- Story time - get the kids to write you a story with pictures. When it's time for bed, they can read you their story.
- A picnic is always a great idea. If the weather holds off, there are heaps of local parks and lakes that you can visit, and there is usually a playground for the kids. But if it decides to rain, have a picnic in the lounge room instead!

ARTS AND CRAFTS! Make a birds nest to put little treasures in.

1. Simply blow up a balloon as big as you and the kids want.
2. Take at least one metre of string and dip it in a bowl of craft glue.
3. Wrap the string around the bottom third of the balloon. This part will require one person to hold the balloon while a second person wraps the string.
4. Hang it on the clothesline or the clotheshorse with a piece of string.
5. When the glue is dry, pop the balloon and get to decorating! Use simple craft supplies like feathers and pipe cleaners to decorate your birds nest.

BOOK REVIEW - 'My Happy Sad Mummy'

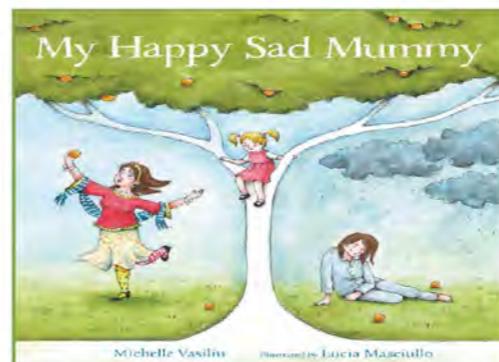
by Kelsey Sulzer

My Happy Sad Mummy is a powerful and engaging picture book written by Michelle Vasiliu. It is based on her own personal experiences of being a parent with Bipolar Disorder.

This book is a children's book; the language and length of the book is fitting for young children to help keep them engaged while educating them. 'Mummy' is sometimes very, very sad, and she has trouble being motivated to get out of bed. And other times 'Mummy' is very, very happy and can have a lot more energy than usual to the point where she forgets about other things. Sometimes 'Mummy' has to take medicine, sometimes she has to go to hospital, and sometimes other family members have to step in to help care for the child.

It can be difficult to find a starting point of how to explain a mental illness to a child in a way that they will understand. *My Happy Sad Mummy* uses engaging and vibrant pictures to help tell the story from a child's point of view of having a parent with Bipolar disorder. This is not only a resource for parents and their children, but also for schools, additional family members, carers and mental health support workers. This book is a fantastic introduction for young children to explain in simple language some of the symptoms a parent with Bipolar Disorder may experience. I strongly encourage any parent who wishes to have this conversation with their child to give this a read!

My Happy Sad Mummy



"I strongly recommend 'My Happy Sad Mummy' - I have not seen anything of its like before."
-- Professor Philip Mitchell (AM, Scientia Professor, Head of the School of Psychiatry, University of New South Wales and Director of the Black Dog Institute).

FOR SIGNED COPIES:

Please contact the author at michelle@michelle.vasiliu.com or by phone on 0418 006 852.

MORE INFORMATION:

www.michellevasiliu.com

My Happy Sad Mummy is an engaging and sensitive picture book. It fills a major gap: explaining to a young child the impact on a parent of a major mental illness such as bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder affects between 1- 2% of the population and can affect young parents in particular as it usually begins in late adolescence.

Michelle Vasiliu draws from her own experience of bipolar disorder, cleverly and humorously portraying the emotional rollercoaster of this illness, as a young child might perceive it, and how through all these difficulties, the bond of love between mother and child remains true. A fantastic book and invaluable resource for parents, teachers and mental health workers.

HOW TO BUY:

Go to www.classic-jojo.com and use the Search function to look up 'My Happy Sad Mummy', or go direct to the link: www.classic-jojo.com/shop/picture-stories/happy-sad-mummy/. Softcover format is \$16.99 RRP, Hardcover is \$24.99 RRP (inc. GST).



WHAT IS SEPARATION ANXIETY? (for young children)

Separation Anxiety is when a child gets upset when separated from a parent or loved carer. It is normal during early childhood. It's a developmental stage that happens around 6 -8 months and can last up until 3-4 yrs of age. It often occurs when children are entering new situations that are unfamiliar, like starting 3 year old Kindergarten.

If they haven't been left with anyone other than family members then it is a totally alien experience and they are probably overwhelmed with feelings they perhaps can't identify. Separation anxiety reflects the child's attempts to hold on to what is safe in a very scary world, and it will settle down as the child grows older and becomes more confident.

The positive side (there is always one!) is that it shows a strong bond between parent and child. Your child is feeling anxious because they may think you may not return, you say you will be back in 2 hrs but to a 3 or 4 year old what does that mean?

A child generally starts worrying about being away from a parent or guardian when s/he is old enough to know that there are special people in his life who look after him/her, and when s/he can clearly recognize the difference between family members and strangers.

If a pattern is established where the special person always comes back after small separations, the child eventually learns the world is a safe place, and s/he is able to be happy when the special person is not there.

Children may be upset at the time that the parent leaves them, be relaxed and happy with their parent/guardian, then be upset again when the parent returns and they 'remember' that they were left. This is not 'manipulative' - it is a normal child development, and shows that the child still does not yet feel really comfortable when the parent is not there , but is learning through this new experience.

Some children do not show any signs of distress upon separation. This may be because they feel safe (some are more easy-going than others; some have already learnt that they are safe and their parents will always come back).

There may be changes at home that result in separation difficulties: new baby, new house, parent changes jobs, parent goes to hospital.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- **Be patient** - utilize the time you are with them (stuck by your side) to sit at the table and talk to them about the activities they are doing, talk about the other children and about the flow of the day (you will have fruit soon and then it will be outside time).
- **Always say good bye**, even if you have to go while s/he is upset. This builds trust. Sneaking out or trying to get away may make a child feel that you can't be trusted.
- **Say Good-bye - And Mean It!** As tough as it may be, parents must not prolong their good-byes. Keep it simple and try establishing a ritual, such as a kiss or a hug. Keeping your good-byes short and sweet convey the message that you have confidence in your child's ability to cope.
- **Avoid hovering around.** Your child will sense your anxiety, and this will make it more difficult for her to calm down.
- **Avoid bargaining or bribing your child to behave.** Your little one should be allowed his/her feelings. Bribing with food when upset is not going to help healthy eating habits or emotional eating.
- **Rather than say, "I'll be back in two hours" talk about the sequence of events.** Tell them pickup time is after they play, hear a story and have a play outside.

- **Make a play date with another child** in your group to help with feeling a part of a group.
- **Keeping an upbeat and positive attitude about your child's kindergarten**, teacher and friends, you'll help your child feel safe and enjoy his time at school.
- **Ask your spouse or trusted friend to take a turn dropping off at kindergarten.**
- **Try to avoid saying "s/he didn't want to come today" in front of your child**, as this reinforces his/her insecurity. The staff are very good at reading the children as they come in and will move to assist, if staff are helping another child, sit at an activity with your child and talk about what they could do with the materials.
- **Two steps forward one step back.** Don't be surprised if you solve the problem and it reoccurs after holidays and sick days.
- **If it is taking a few weeks for them to settle, you can tuck a family picture or a loving reminder away in your child's backpack for her to look at.** Or something that interests him (dinosaur, stone, insect toy) that he can tuck in his pocket and show the staff.
- **If they are attached to a soft toy or teddy let them bring it in their kinder bag if needed.**
- **Tell your child where you'll be** during the session while you are gone; make it sound as boring as possible!
- **Show that you understand his/her feelings.** If s/he says I didn't like you going, acknowledge his/her feelings: "I could see you were sad (angry) when I left you, but when I came back to pick you up you were sitting next to X and smiling/singing/relaxing."
- **Talk about what you will do after kindergarten** so that s/he can focus on what you will both do together (don't make it busy as they will be tired), share a book, play a favourite board game together or "We can make spaghetti for supper, will you help me with that?"
- **Read books on separation (see below)**, ask me for some ideas, go to the local library or book store.
- **Remind your child of situations they have overcome fear/sadness.** "Do you remember when you used to cry when you stayed at Nana's when you were little and now you don't cry any more?" or "Do you remember when you couldn't ride your bike and you tried and you tried and now you can. It will get easier and easier!"
- **Let your child shine!** Let him or her know how proud you were of them!
- **Believe in your child's ability to make positive changes** (you will not be holding his/her hand at high school!!!)

BOOKS THAT CAN HELP

These three books to help parents deal with separation anxiety in their preschoolers:

- "Owl Babies" by Martin Waddell
- "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn
- "Tom's First Day at Kindergarten" by Margaret Wild (This turns the tables, Mum and Dad bear want to stay at kindergarten as it is so much fun, Tom soon realizes he really needs mum and dad to go home!)

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR PUBLIC DENTAL CARE?

Who can access public dental care?

1. All children 0-12 years old.
2. Youth 13-17 years who have or are dependants of health care or pensioner concession card holders.
3. All youth 13-17 who are in out-of-home care provided by the Department of Human Services or those in custodial care.
4. All adults who are health care or pensioner concession cardholders.
5. All refugees and asylum seekers.

What kind of treatment can I get?

General, denture, and emergency care is available. Minimal charges and waiting lists may apply. There is also an exemption form which can be completed for people who access service from a mental health case manager, to ensure there is no out-of-pocket expense.

What is priority access?

Priority access means you don't have to go on a waiting list, you will be given the next available appointment. Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, pregnant women, registered clients of mental health and disability services (with a letter of recommendation), and all refugees and asylum seekers are able to get priority access at clinics in the Eastern Region.

Where are the clinics?

Knox Community Health Service 1063 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully Ph: 9757 6200	Whitehorse Community Health Service 43 Carrington Road, Box Hill Ph: 9897 1792
EACH 124 Mt Dandenong Road, Ringwood Ph: 9259 4900	MonashLink Level 1, 9-15 Cooke Street, Clayton Ph: 1300 552 509
Inner East Community Health 7 Samarinda Avenue, Ashburton Ph: 8885 6822	Inspiro 17 Clarke Street, Lilydale Ph: 9738 8801

SPOTLIGHT ON A SERVICE

In each newsletter we plan to interview someone from a support agency so that you can learn a bit more about resources that are available to families.

What is your name? Rima Kalaidjian

Who do you work for? headspace Knox

We are a service for Young People aged 12-25 years of age. We provide general health services (GPs), alcohol and other drug services, mental health services, and vocational, educational and training services

What is your role at headspace Knox?

I am the Youth, Families and Engagement Coordinator at headspace Knox. I coordinate groups run at headspace Knox such as the Friday afternoon drop in, parenting group, as well as youth focused specific groups.

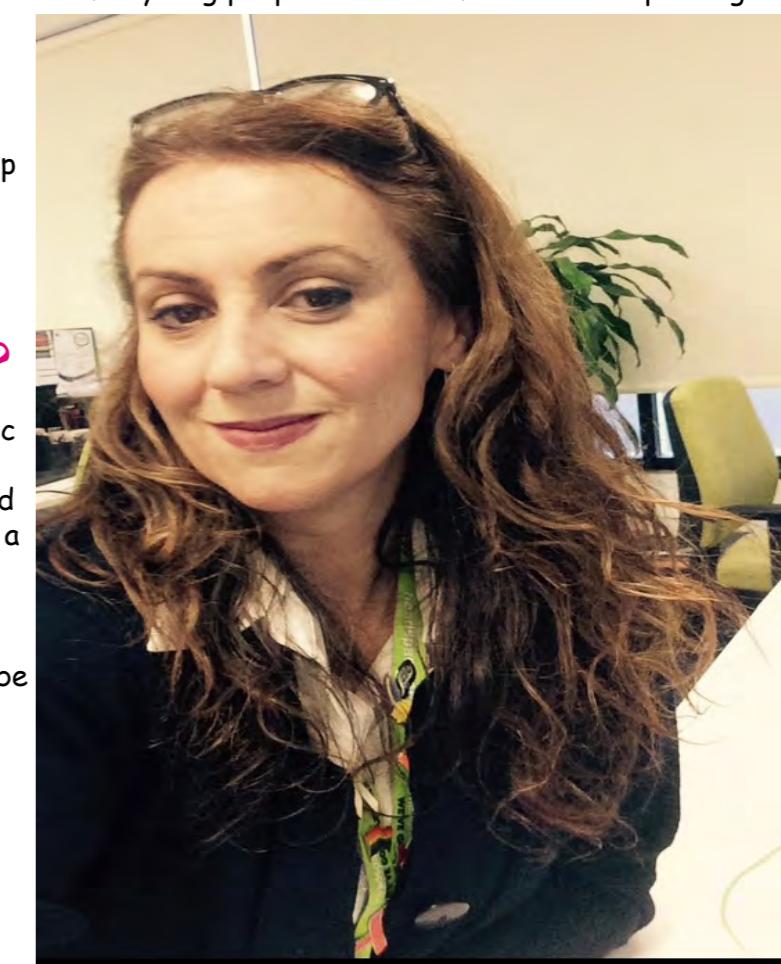
I attend schools and events to promote mental health and wellbeing to young people and to reduce any stigma associated with mental health and barriers that may impact mental health. My role also involves running information sessions for young people and their families and speaking publicly at events.

I organise headspace Knox's Youth Reference Group. There are 12 young local people on this reference group and they help us ensure we provide services with a better understanding from a youth's perspective.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is speaking at public forums, schools and other local services. I enjoy communicating with young people and delivering important information to them in a way that they relate to.

I also love the fact that young people feel comfortable speaking to me and that I can be authentic in my delivery - that is a blessing.



KARA'S STORY

Hi, my name is Kara. I am a mother to 8 wonderful children, each with their own set of medical issues...

I have, unfortunately, battled the horrible mental illness Post Natal Depression (PND) after 5 of my children, and am still battling this.

Having PND makes life hard. I often lack motivation to do anything, go anywhere, or even really see people. I tend to be quick to revert within myself as a way of coping, and am quick to anger. Basically put, I am a sad, miserable hermit who lives with the weight of the world on my shoulders.

Connections has been wonderful! As I said, my older children also have their own issues, and with this, the programs they have been able to access through Connections* have been wonderful. We have been to many groups, CHAMPS (2 children) to help them understand mental health issues better, CALM* for helping with high anxiety, and the MAT (Martial Arts as Therapy) program (2 children).

Each of these programs has helped in some way or another. My favourite has been the MAT program. The instructors are great, the children love that they are being physical, and they learn new skills to help 'try' and react differently in certain situations.

We were ALL very excited to be invited to attend the FaPMI Christmas Party (ie Family Fun Day*), and the kids still talk about it! They often ask if we can go again. I loved being there because I didn't feel so alone, I knew that other people around me also had their own mental health issues, and I felt I could drop the charade, if that makes sense?

Life with ANY mental health issues comes with a huge uphill battle. All I can say is: get help, access as much help as you can and remember, you ARE worth fighting for, you ARE awesome, and people are there to help you on your journey!

*(Editors Comments)

- Connections is a Family Support Service based in parts of the Eastern Region and they have a range of services on offer for families. Their phone number is: 9724 2222
- CALM is a group program for girls aged 8-11 years, who appear to worry excessively, fear separation, constantly seek reassurance, and who avoid situations that worry them.
- The FaPMI Family Fun Day is an annual event facilitated by a partnership of local services and Project Managed by Eastern Health FaPMI. It is free and families where a parent has a mental illness are welcome to contact Bronwyn Sanders on 0408 291 580 or Bronwyn.Sanders@easternhealth.org.au for more information. The date for the Family Fun Day in 2015 is Sunday 29 November, so put it in your diaries!

GILLIAN'S RAINBOW BRIDGE

Gillian's Rainbow Bridge is a new and innovative program held on a farm in Healesville. It has been developed in memory and honour of Gill, a local girl, who just three years ago unexpectedly passed away at the age of 31. This program aims to support children who are facing difficulties in life, and abused/neglected farm animals by bringing them together to help each other heal.

A day at the farm is just the beginning for these 6 - 12 year old children, whom, with support from our vet nurse, will learn how to care for, respect and understand the needs of a variety of farm animals. There will be ample time to pat, feed and get to know our resident friends.

Part of the day's activities is sharing a healthy lunch. This is a time when we talk about the vegies we have collected from the garden, also a time when we taste a variety of locally made jams, relishes and cheeses - all donated by supporting locals. The children's enthusiasm and comments are delightful and there is a real buzz of excitement at the table.

GILLIAN'S RAINBOW BRIDGE CONTINUED

In the afternoon we go for walks on the farm, running through the paddocks and collecting items they will later use in their handwork. Felting, making mandalas and posies in tea cups allows the children to express themselves in a supportive, encouraging environment. Conversations flow during these sessions, while hands and eyes are busy on craft. Each child is proud to take home their completed items. We end the day with a goodbye to the animals, a top up of fruit and homemade cake together with a feeling of being connected with the farm and the animals - their hearts and minds are full of new life experiences. For more information about Gillian's Rainbow Bridge please go to:

- Website address- www.gilliansrainbowbridge.org.au
- Email address- info@gilliansrainbowbridge.org.au
- Mobile phone- 0497 230 394
- Farm phone- 03 5962 5995
- Postal address- PO Box 343 Yarra Glen, Vic. 3775
- Farm address- 79 Whelans Road, Healesville 3777
- We are a not-for-profit charity.
- We have deductible gift recipient status.





Want to learn some new ways to discover yourself?

Girls with Positive Attitude is a program for young women aged 13 – 16yrs. It's an opportunity for young women to connect with and learn from others. The program encourages young women to be confident to cope with life's challenges, to stand up for what they believe and achieve their goals.

The program runs for five days over six weeks and is for young women who are experiencing difficulties dealing with their emotions, struggling with significant relationships and allows the young women to explore who they are and who they want to be.

There are a variety of topics covered such as: communication, feelings and emotions, self-esteem, confidence, assertiveness, strategies for getting past anger, relationship building, cyber safety and Diversity.

When: Thursday's during Term 3, 2015 (July 23rd, 30th, August 6th, 13th & 27th
Where: St Pauls, next to McDonalds Boronia, 273 Dorset Road

Time: 9:30am to 2:30pm.

Cost: Free

Contact: Lauren Thorsen from Connections on 9724-2222 , Rachel Hamilton from Connections on 9875 4222 or Michelle Pascoe from Knox City Council Youth Services on 9298-8550



Parent Information Forum **MANAGING ANXIETY AND WORRIES (8-13 YEARS)**

Parents play an essential role in helping their child manage anxiety and worries particularly in the pre-teen (8–13 years) stage of development where there is so much change and transition.

In this Parent Information Forum Michelle Graber will cover what normal childhood and adolescent development looks like; how personality and environment contribute to well being; signs and symptoms associated with anxiety in young people; and practical ways parents can offer support and assist in building resilience.

Michelle Graeber is the CEO of the Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria (ARCVic) and has more than 20 years' experience largely in the disability and mental health sectors.

Date:	Wednesday 15 July 2015
Time:	7.30pm-9.30pm
Venue:	Waratah Room, Whitehorse Centre, 397 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading (rear of Nunawading Library)
Bookings:	Registering your attendance is essential. Please book online at www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/Parent-Information-Forums.html
Further information:	Council's Parent Resource Officer Molly Block on 9262 6175 or molly.block@whitehorse.vic.gov.au
Cost:	\$2 gold coin donation payable on the night Please note unfortunately we are unable to accommodate children in this forum.



#fridays@headspace



12-25 year olds

2pm-5pm

Movies, games and snacks!

Come hang with us every
Friday arvo

Call Rima Kalaidjian on 9801 6088

or email rima.kalaidjian@headspaceknox.com.au

We look forward to seeing you there

Location headspace Knox, Westfield Knox Ozone

Shop 3027, 2 Capital City Blvd

Wantirna South

