Welcome to the autumn edition of the FaPMI newsletter. As I write this there are still many bushfires burning out of control and I haven’t managed to get into school routine yet so it doesn’t feel like I am ready for autumn at all…

This edition has details about the Premiers Active Challenge which occurs over April, a description of the amazing work that family services does by Danni Harrison, a book review, a personal story and some ideas about mindfulness; something we are trying to do more of in our family. We would love to have some personal contributions from our readers so please send any ideas or articles to bronwyn.sanders@easternhealth.org.au.

PROGRAMS

We will be running a CHAMPS school holiday program for children aged 8-12 in the April School holidays:

When: Wednesday 10th April, Thursday 11th April, Friday 12th April from 10am-4pm

Please note we would like children to attend the full 3 days and we will offer a parent support group as well at the beginning and the end of the program.

Where: Urban Life; 143 Maroondah Hwy Ringwood

Martial Arts as Therapy (MAT) life skills program

When: Wednesdays 4.30 -5.30

Where: The Avenue Uniting Church; 46 Blackburn Rd Blackburn

For all program referrals please contact Bronwyn Sanders on 0408 29 1580

St Vincent’s FaPMI program will be running Space 4 us a peer support program for young people aged 10-14 in Camberwell. See flyer on pg 6 for details

FAPMI COORDINATOR TEAM

Bronwyn Sanders (Mon, Tues, Wed) CHAMPS Referrals – 0408 291 580

Michelle Hegarty (Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs)

Georgia Cripps (Tues – Thurs)

Becca Allchin (Tues or Wed)

Elizabeth Fraser (Mon – Thurs)

Ph: 9871 3988, Murnong Clinic, 4 Bona Street, Ringwood East

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PREMIER’S ACTIVE APRIL

Source: https://www.activeapril.vic.gov.au

Premier’s Active April is part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to promote healthy and active lifestyles and get Victorians to join in the fun of increased physical activity.

You don’t have to do the whole program – even if you just do one extra activity in the holidays that would be a great achievement. You can sign up anytime between now and the end of April.


Once you are registered you are eligible for the following:

- 10 free passes at your local participating YMCA or local government recreation facility
- 30% discount at SEA LIFE Melbourne Aquarium and LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Melbourne
- A 2 for 1 ticket offer to Otway Fly Treetop Adventures
- 10% discount at Sovereign Hill
- 15% off at Sportsmart in-store and online
- Free experiences at participating Parks Victoria parks
- 15% discount for a Coasting: Stand Up Paddleboarding session
- 15% off Rock Up Netball Train and Youth Programs
- 20% discount for Netball Victoria community clinics
- A 2 for 1 green fee offer at participating Golf Australia courses
- 10% discount on term 2 My Golf Australia Junior Programs
- Five free group dance lessons at a participating DanceSport Victoria centre
- One free Cardio Tennis trial at participating Tennis Victoria courts
- One hour free tennis court hire at Melbourne Park or Albert Reserve
- Entry into the draw to win tickets to 2020 Australian Open Tennis Finals
- Weekly email tips on healthy eating and being active
My name is Danni Harrison, and I am a Family Services Practitioner, based at Anglicare in Bayswater.

Anglicare is a large organisation, and has 3 offices in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne- Box Hill, Bayswater. There are a variety of programs offered to meet the needs of the local communities and the following programs are offered at the Bayswater office where I am situated:

- Drug and alcohol
- Family Violence
- Child First – Intake and assessment
- Cradle to Kinder

IFS also has an adolescent specific worker who will focus on support and engagement with the young person, and also work with the parents.

The other programs offered at the Bayswater office include:

Here is an example of our work:

Suzanne and her 3 children, aged between 11 years and 17 years, were referred to IFS in January, with the focus on promoting improved mental health for all family members, as well as supporting and advocating for the ongoing involvement of family violence support services.

A further focus of our work with the family was in relation to safety planning and actions that would promote the family’s ability to cope prior to, and following, the father’s release from prison as a result of charges related to family violence issues.

During the involvement, Suzanne chose to prioritise care team meetings, so that she and all other care team members could share information, resources and support options.

A number of safety planning meetings with Suzanne, Each, IFS and Police members also occurred, which resulted in shared responsibilities for actions, as well as additional support and encouragement to be given to Suzanne.

Following the safety planning meetings, Suzanne and her children choose to move out of the family home into accommodation for a number of nights, as well as Suzanne prioritising the celebration of her youngest child’s birthday, as well as outings to the movies and to Melbourne Museum.
Mindfulness is nothing more than living in the present moment (which is not the same as thinking about the present moment) without judging or ignoring anything or getting carried away by the pressures of everyday life.

Mindfulness is feeling the sun on your skin, feeling the salty tears rolling down your cheeks, feeling a ripple of frustration in your body. It is about experiencing these things without having to do anything about it, just noticing but not having a reaction or an opinion. Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and without judgement.

Mindfulness is the opposite of mindfulness. Have you ever: Eaten lunch at your desk, without tasting a single bite? Or been driving from work to home and then all of a sudden realised you don’t actually remember seeing what colour the traffic lights were? These are examples of a state of automatic pilot, where we’re going through the motions in our mind and we’re disconnected from our body.

Parenting and Mindfulness:

If you apply the 3 principles of mindfulness to parenting it can help to build better relationships

Presence – enables you to be simply here; not thinking about all the other things that need to get done. Just being in the moment with your child whatever it is they are experiencing

Understanding- enables you to better relate to your children and put yourself in their shoes. What is going on inside your child right now?

Acceptance- is the inner willingness to recognise your child’s thoughts and feelings without wanting to change or manipulate them. Acceptance is not the same as putting up with everything. Instead it is the profound realisation that as a parent you don’t have to have an opinion on the feelings thoughts and actions of either your child or yourself.

Mindfulness is not easy and takes lots of practice but it is something that you can practice together with your child.

Try the following apps for some simple practice sessions:
https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-appXHEALw_wcB
Personal Story

This article is written by my son aged 10 who is struggling with anxiety at times. I asked him to write down how it feels. Sauron is the bad guy in the Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Sometimes I feel the world is against me and darkness is possessing me, and everything I know and love. I feel like Sauron’s hand is grabbing my heart and drowning it into icy water. My body feels tense and I feel a cold sweat; my heart starts to beat ten times faster than usual. My chest starts heaving. I start to silent scream and my body starts to twitch.

To make myself feel better I try to reflect on all the good things that happened on the previous day.

Book Review

Courage for Beginners

Author: Karen Harrington
Publisher: Little, Brown and Company (2014)
Genre: Contemporary fiction, coming of age (middle-grade)

Mysti’s family has a secret: her mum never leaves the house. When her dad falls and has to go to hospital, it is Mysti who takes care of everybody in the household. I only realised once I read the Author’s Note at the end that this book was informed by Karen Harrington’s lived experience; her mother also had agoraphobia. This comes through in the sensitive way that Mysti’s mum’s condition is described. The family had a tradition of telling jokes to cheer one another up, and it lightened what would otherwise be very heavy subject matter.

Mysti is a resilient young girl who loves to tell stories to help her through tough times and although she had a lot to carry on her twelve-year-old shoulders, she was also just like any other twelve-year-old girl. She faced sibling squabbles and friendship dramas in an endearing, loveable way. This book is suitable for a young audience, and might also be useful for adults seeking to understand more about what it might be like for a young person in Mysti’s situation.
Space4us Holiday Program
Wed 10th & 11th April 2019
930am–330pm

Venue: Camberwell Market Place
Level 1 519-525 Riversdale Rd Camberwell

Space4us is a peer support group for young people 10-14 years
who have a parent, older sibling or other adult family member who experiences mental distress or has a mental illness.

Meet with others in similar situations to share experiences, understand it better and other ways that help.

Topics will include

- Understanding different types of adult mental distresses or illnesses
- Relationships with family and friends
- Communication and problem solving
- Responding to stigma and different ways to take care of ourselves.

More information?
It’s free. Including all activities, snacks, meals and laughs. We can help with transport.

Helen 0419 658 694 or helen.carter2@svha.org.au
Caroline 0466 408 757 or caroline.varney@boroondara.vic.gov.au

N.B. This group is aimed at 10-14 years, but 15-18 year olds are welcome to enquire about this or other groups planned for later in the year.