

SPRING 2018

Welcome to a late Winter/early Spring Edition of the FaPMI Newsletter. We are half way through Term 3, and Term 4 will soon be upon us with the lead up to Christmas and many school activities as teachers try to complete their learning with students for the year.

For your information, I have resigned from Eastern Health and the FaPMI Program, to take up a position as Manager of headspace in Greensborough. I feel very torn in making this decision, having loved the work and the team and all the families, children and carers I have come into contact with during my time at Eastern Health. However, it may be that our paths will cross again in the work I will be doing at headspace!

We all leave a footprint in the FaPMI team, and the newsletter will continue to be produced by a FaPMI team member, so don't despair there will be following editions for you to enjoy, with the potential of different approaches.

This edition has a focus on Dual Diagnosis - with a review of the book *The Flying Dream* as well as a personal story about Dianna's experience of dual diagnosis. Michelle Hegarty has contributed these articles and we are very thankful for the courage of the parent she spoke to in sharing her experience with us and the readers of this newsletter.

The parenting article provides ideas that can be useful for all ages of managing children who want to be boss! Parenting approaches have changed over time, and it is helpful if we adjust our language and approach in order to bring out the best in our children in a time of more flexibility and change. The article provides food for thought.

We also have some information about the NDIS - National Disability Insurance Scheme. Feel free to contact FaPMI if you would like a copy of the resource that has been developed for parents when considering their parenting needs when applying for NDIS.

CONTENTS

Welcome	1
School Holiday Activities	2-5
Parenting Article	6
NDIS Article	7
Spotlight on a service	8
Book Review	9
Personal Story	10
Champs Activity -	
The Worry Tree	11
Flyer for young people	12

PROGRAMS

FaPMI Family Fun Day

When?
Sunday 25 Nov 2018
from 11am - 3pm

Where?
Lifeworks, Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood
Contact?
Bronwyn Sanders on
Bronwyn.sanders@
easternhealth.org.au or
0408 291 580 to register
interest in any CHAMPS
Programs for Term 1 2018.

FAPMI COORDINATOR TEAM

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

Michelle Hegarty
(Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs)

Georgia Cripps (Thurs, Fri)

Becca Allchin (Tues or Wed)

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

School Holiday Activities

Source:
www.kidspot.com.au

HOW TO MAKE A MARSHMALLOW CATERPILLAR

You will need

paper

paint

plastic plate

marshmallows

googly eyes

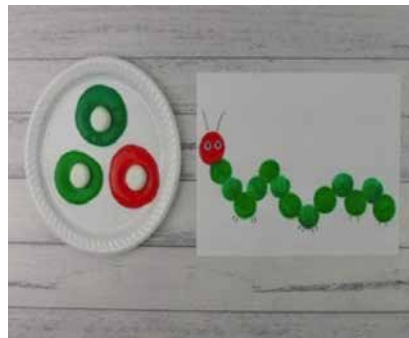
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Activity

Get your paint ready on the plastic plate and add the marshmallows.

Use the marshmallows as a stamp and make a caterpillar shape.

Add the googly eyes then draw on the legs and antennae.



Benefits

Besides just being a super fun activity, you might be surprised to learn that there are educational benefits to this activity, too. It's the perfect activity for practising those fine motor skills, it encourages creativity, it's great for colour recognition and you can turn it into a language and literacy activity by reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Ellen worked in Early Childhood Education for over 10 years before becoming a Stay at Home Mum to a four-year-old and a one-year-old. She loves playing, creating, making, exploring, baking, building and learning with her young children.

PARKS/PLAYGROUNDS

Source: www.mammaknowseast.com.au

THE VILLAGE SQUARE – HARCREST BOULEVARD, WANTIRNA SOUTH

Mamma's little daredevil LOVES a super fast slide. She is in her complete element here at the Village Square Park. The main green slippery dip is one of the fastest we have encountered and has a brilliant view from the top. The main structure is the showpiece of the playspace and is also where you will find the sandpit! The sand is



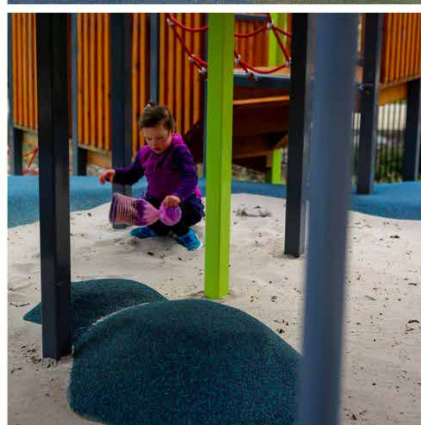
tucked below the climbing frame although lots seem to find its way down the inclines as well. At this park you will also find musical poles, a pencil shaped nest swing, a climbing net and a basketball half court. Overall, a great combination of playground elements making it a fun trip to the park!

Mamma's special mention

The Village Square is the second park instalment amongst the new homes in the estate. You will find the community garden playground, with plenty more slides, just walking distance up the road.

The nitty gritty

No toilet facilities - shops nearby - picnic tables and shelter - bbq facilities - basketball court - grassy areas nearby - water hazards nearby.



BOX HILL GARDENS - STATION STREET, BOX HILL

Just when Mamma thought the slide at Surrey Park was epic enough, Box Hill goes and gets itself this twisty-turny monster! The Box Hill Gardens is an incredibly beautiful public space and with the addition of this fancy new playspace, it is certainly the place to be.

There are flying foxes, tonnes of things to climb, shiny musical drums, an inbuilt trampoline and spinny things galore. Mamma's crew love the maze of climbing nets and that brilliant slide tower.

There are rubber trails throughout the zones, making it easy to navigate and lots of different and interesting equipment to suit a range of age groups.

The gardens also have a great sports zone nearby. Plenty of room for basketball games, a hit of table tennis and is ideal for some scooter practice. It even has its own running track which if you are super keen, can be followed the entire way around the gardens. In other corners of this park you will find another playground (a classic 80s style that can still be fun), heaps of green space for your pooch or ball games, and a formal duck pond.

Mamma's special mention

if you have ever visited Box Hill Hospital (or had both of your little ones here!), you will know parking can be tough. But if you watch the signs AND most importantly your watch, you will be fine!



FENTON RESERVE PLAYGROUND, FENTON AVENUE, KEW

The locals (and Mamma) LOVE this park. Sometimes, the cutest little pocket of community heart is found in one of the most unlikely of places - like the back corner of the Kew Junction carpark!

No need to worry though, this reserve is fully fenced! Double win!

This area has plenty of history and recently a gorgeous makeover that includes a new play structure, an excellent round sandpit and a some beautiful communal garden that welcomes all visitors. There is a farming theme too and your kids will love the little play kitchen hidden under the slide.

The families that frequent the park often bring and leave toys, Mamma says this is such a great idea and they are a real hit, especially in the sandpit. Please enjoy these and leave them in place for the next group of kiddos to play with.

Mamma's special mention

Visiting on a beautiful day? Continue your adventure up Cotham Road and explore Alexandra Gardens or stop in for coffee at Percy's Airplane Cafe.



Parenting Kids Who Want to be Boss

Source:
www.parentingideas.com.au

BY MICHAEL GROSE

If you are locked in a power struggle with a child or youngster, then you'll be forever battling to get some cooperation unless you make some adjustments. The coercive approach won't cut it as they'll refuse outright, or just dawdle along on their own terms.

Any of these situations sound familiar?

You are trying to get a child to do something and they just won't play your game. Your request for help is met with an excuse or, worse, an argument. Reminders about bedtime are met with a defiant, 'NO!' or worse – dawdling. "I'll go to bed later," is the response from some children. It's infuriating!

Most families will have at least one child who insists on getting their way and doesn't like to be told what to do. I call them 'Make me' kids because everything about their demeanour at times wants you to 'Make them' do what they're told. These kids value power and don't shy away from a fight.

Avoiding power struggles

Power struggles between parents and children are common. Often "Because I said so" becomes more important than the issue we are fighting or arguing over.

The key reason for this battle of wills between parents and difficult kids fundamentally comes from a desire for control. If you are locked



in a power struggle with a child then you will forever be battling with them for cooperation unless you take a different track with them.

Forget the "Do this and do it now!" approach with these kids.

It may have cut it in the past and it may be effective with 'Well-behaved' kids, but it doesn't cut it these days, particularly with kids who want to be the boss.

These kids refuse to cooperate when the tone and language of coercion is used. These kids value control and want autonomy, so you need to communicate in a way that doesn't trigger their need to wrest control from you.

Such kids respond well to the language of cooperation, which involves giving them a choice, and is more about asking for help than demanding

compliance. You don't have to grovel, but you do need to watch your language with these little power-seekers and remember that cooperation is won, not demanded!

Taking a different approach

Here are some strategies that will increase the likelihood of getting cooperation from kids who like to be the 'Boss':

1. **Don't fight over every issue:** Cut the little 'Boss' some slack and let them make some decisions themselves. If you want a say in every area of their lives then you'll soon find yourself locked in power struggles over relatively inconsequential issues like clothing, bedroom tidiness and food. For instance, if a young child doesn't want to wear a jumper in winter then so be it. There are bigger parenting fish to

fry! I see parents exhaust themselves over minor battles so that when big issues come up, they just give in!

2. **Tell them what you will do:** Most of us tell kids what to do, which they promptly ignore. It's far better to tell them what action YOU will take. This subtle shift in language has a huge impact in terms of getting some cooperation from 'Make me' kids. Next time you want to tell you child what to do, catch yourself. Instead, tell them what you are going to do. Here's some examples: "I'll serve ice cream when you are seated at the table." "I'll listen to you when you have calmed down." "I'll drive when

you are quiet." Get into the habit of focusing on what you will do, rather than on what they should do and you'll start to see an shift in terms of getting cooperative behaviour almost immediately.

3. **Let consequences work their magic:** Of course, you need to stop nagging kids about their behaviours and allow them to experience the consequences of some of their poor choices. This removes you from the power struggle and lets experience be their teacher.

Power-hungry or bossy kids challenge parents who are authoritarian by nature, or who were raised in very

authoritarian ways. These kids need smarter handling if we are going to get cooperation from them. They are often referred to as stubborn, disobedient, pig-headed and argumentative. The flip side is that they can be strong-willed, assertive and determined individuals.

Either way they can present difficulties to us as parents as we manage them on a day-to-day basis, particularly when they directly challenge us. But with a little change in parenting style, they can grow into wonderful kids who are confident in their abilities and comfortable making independent decisions.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Are you currently considering applying for the NDIS or have you already had a planning meeting to discuss your needs and support that will assist you under this scheme.

There are many benefits to accessing the NDIS, but it is a change in the way mental health community support services are delivered and can be confusing until you understand how to apply, determine what support you might need, and access services.

If you have a case manager in the Adult Mental Health Service at Eastern Health, it would be worth discussing the NDIS with them and asking

for their support to enable you to consider applying to access the NDIS. They will be able to assist you by providing you with information about this system and answering any questions you may have about the NDIS. The NDIS has only just begun in the Eastern Region in November 2017, so there are many questions everyone has about the system. However, clinicians will endeavour to assist you as much as they can.

The other area to consider within the NDIS is if you have a child who is under 7yo with developmental delays or a child over 7yo who has a diagnosed disability. Your child may be eligible for NDIS

due to their difficulties, and it is worthwhile discussing this with your case manager or other workers involved in your child's treatment and care.

FaPMI have a draft document which they are currently developing to provide parents with information and ideas about what sorts of support they may consider in terms of their parenting needs, when meeting with an NDIS Planner. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this document, please contact Kirsty Jungwirth for copy on 9871 3988 or Kirsty.jungwirth@easternhealth.org.au, and a copy can be emailed or mailed to you.

Spotlight on a Service

“WE ALL HAVE A STORY IN US”

AUTHORS DISCUSS WRITING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH TO CROYDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The partnership with Eastern Region Library Network and Eastern Health FaPMI Program (Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness) started with a belief that libraries are a welcoming place located in the local community and the ideal place to have presentations about what are sometimes difficult topics to discuss. Books are also a resource which can provide an avenue to explore thoughts and feelings and learn about new ideas, as well as allow us to travel into our imagination.

All libraries have a Youth Librarian and they are an invaluable resource for families and young people. Croydon library was identified as a library close to a school which is creative and innovative in its educational approach. Croydon Community School have students writing their own personal journal and stories and developing children's books as part of their curriculum.

The stars aligned, and several well-known Australian authors were identified to provide a panel discussion about their writing journey, and also explore the benefit of writing when experiencing vulnerability or challenging times. All authors displayed and discussed their books which covered the topic of mental health challenges.

- Kim Hodge's novel 'Girl Over the Edge' is a memoir and describes her experiences



growing up in a small country town, having a traumatic incident occur and mental health challenges. She has also written a second novel 'Girl on the Edge'.

- David Miller researched and wrote a children's picture book 'Big and Me' about mental illness through the eyes of two machines/ cranes. He also illustrated the book, and it describes one machine being sick, getting a bit 'wobbly' and needing to take his medicine.
- Michelle Vasiliu wrote a children's picture book for her children 'My Happy Sad Mummy' to explain her mental health challenges. It describes in very clear language what can happen when someone has bi-polar disorder and what supports can help. She has written other children's books and is currently writing a book for teenagers, which she read and excerpt of to the students, asking for their input.

The students, authors, and event organisers found the

'Author's Talk' very interesting and thought- provoking. Students were able to discuss some of the challenges within their own family situation with the authors and some of the writing they have begun to undertake.

Additional benefits are that one of the books will be purchased by the school and read as a class and workshopped, with the author providing input into these discussions via email. Students are also able to access a Peer Support Program Space4Us via Eastern Health's FaPMI program if interested.

If you would like further information about the FaPMI Program please call 9871 3988.

Croydon Library is located at 5 Civic Square, Croydon 3136. Phone number is: 9800 6448.

Croydon Community School is located at 177-181 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon 3136. Phone number is: 9724 2900.

Book Review

BY MICHELLE HEGARTY

The Flying Dream

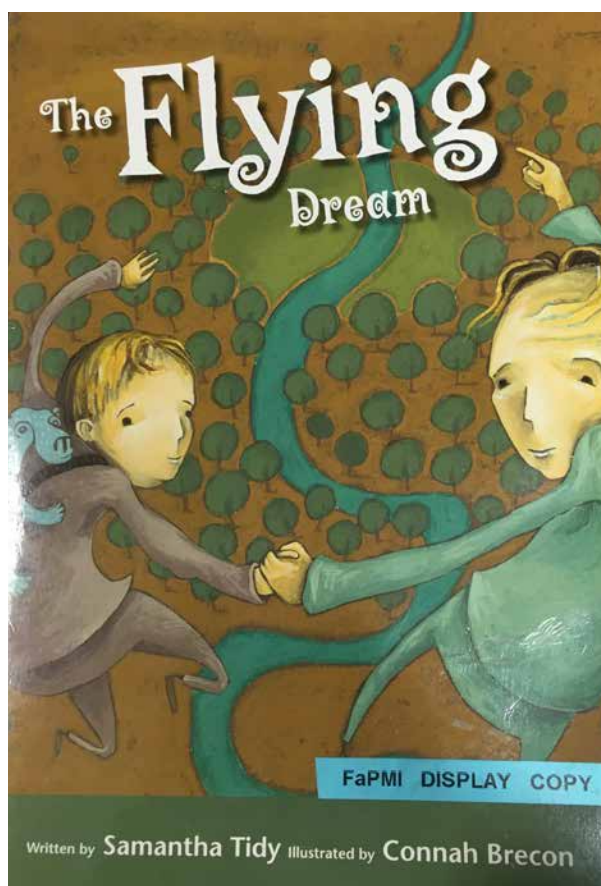
Written by Samantha Tidy and Illustrated by Connah Brecon

Casey's mum is sick again – she has a mental illness and she takes drugs – she gets upset sometimes – she cries a lot – or she gets really crazy and busy and goes out late at night. It can be a scary time for Casey – she worries about mum – and sometimes she looks after her brother James – she wonders why her family has to be different.

This time mum is in hospital – and Casey and James are going to see her.....tomorrow! That's when the flying dream happens. Imagine floating above the clouds and seeing everything below you. That's how Casey and James spotted mum – she looked like she was getting better, and there were people looking out for her. In the morning Casey woke up feeling good. The flying dream helped her feel free from all the stuff she has been feeling.

Mental illness and drug or alcohol misuse affects more people than many of us realise. It's often known as 'dual diagnosis' – and it can be difficult to understand and get treatment. It can also be a tricky time for children and families.

What we do know is, it is important for families to talk about mental illness and drug and alcohol problems. It's important for children and young people to be able to ask questions and get accurate, age-appropriate information.



And it's important to have support when the going gets tough – especially if mum or dad is unwell or in hospital. Some kids will have lots of questions – others won't be so sure yet. Everyone is different – and that's okay!

The Flying Dream is an artistic storybook designed for older primary aged children, and was produced alongside a children's storybook called The Blue Polar Bear. The messages in these books will support any child whose parents may have mental illness and co-existing

drug or alcohol problems.

The FaPMI program also has peer support group programs which can help children and young people to understand their family situation, and get support from others in similar situations. Families and services can also borrow books from our library of resources – we have books for toddlers through to young adults.

Contact FaPMI on 9871 3988 or email fapmi@easternhealth.org.au for further information.

Personal Story - Dianna Evans

“HINDSIGHT CAN BE A WONDERFUL THING”

Looking back over our lives, we can all agree that if we knew what we knew now we would have done things differently - my hindsight affects not only me but my three precious sons.

I was born and raised in regional Victoria and I had been offered a position to study law at the end of Year 12. I wasn't ready to continue study and I was drawn to the bright lights and opportunities that the big city offered. At this stage both alcohol and marijuana were a constant in my life. I discovered party drugs like speed and ecstasy and life was just grand. I really can't explain where the next six years went, but it was not at university.

I met the man I married and quickly had my three precious sons. During this time my mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness and we returned home to spend as much time with her as possible. My marriage broke down, I was working full time, raising three sons and trying to accept the loss of the one constant in my life, my mother.

I continued to create the illusion to all around that everything was OK, but the life that we had behind closed doors was very different. There was an extra that lived in the house with us and that was my best friend, the bottle. After three attempts at detox I finally got it right, I needed to do it for me and not to please anybody else.

Being sober solved many problems but highlighted others that I was not aware of, it seems the reasons for my drug and alcohol use was that I had been self-medicating for most of my life. I had Bi Polar which in my case was dual diagnosis.

My eldest son, without me even noticing, became my carer and took on the role of the adult in the house, looking after not only me but his brothers. He deferred uni and had me come to live with him. I was meant to be the parent and here I was being rescued by Jordan, and the other boys had gone to live with their father for the first time in their lives.

At my next GP appointment Jordan expressed that he wanted to go back to University but felt he couldn't leave me. I was referred to a Mental Health Community Support Service and it was like the doors to Myers opened for the first time. There was help available for not only me, but for Jordan and the whole family. Within a short period of time I had an outreach worker, psychiatrist, and a psychologist who all worked together, which took the responsibility off Jordan for my day to day care and allowed him to return to University.

With supports in place I continued to slowly regain my confidence to become a member of the community again. I went to groups, formed friendships and learnt

many personal skills that assisted in my recovery. I finally got to the stage where I felt ready to challenge myself for the first time in a long time. I enrolled to undertake Certificate IV in Mental Health and AOD as I wanted to help others in my situation - it wasn't easy but I completed the course.

I returned to the workforce one day a week as a Peer Worker, using my lived experience to help others in their recovery journeys. Returning to work gave me purpose in life, and with the continued support from my outreach worker, gave me a sense of stability that I had not experienced for a long time.

I have now been working as a Peer Worker for 5 years and can wholeheartedly say that I learnt my most valuable lesson when I was asked to take the minutes of a Carers meeting. I listened to the stories of carers and how it affected both theirs and the lives of their family members; I had never heard that side of dealing with mental health issues. I went home that night and gathered my sons together and apologised for having no understanding of the ripple effect of MY mental health challenges.

This two hour meeting changed the way I practice as a peer worker. I recognise that mental health does not only affect the person but the whole family unit whether it is parents, siblings or children. I

made it my mission from my own experience to educate myself on services that not only supported the person but the whole family.

Again hindsight being a wonderful thing, if I had have been connected to a service like FaPMI where a family approach to my mental illness was taken, I am positive the profound affect that my challenges caused the family would not have been the case. Programs like CHAMPS, Space4Us, holiday groups, would have given the boys a safe place to have fun and get support without judgement - something that

all children should have. I as a mother would have also been supported with my parenting which I continue to carry the guilt and shame of.

I read this newsletter each time with both sorrow and excitement; sorrow as I was not aware of the life changing supports that were available to my family. But with excitement that I am able to share the newsletters with other parents and families, knowing from my own experience that by having these supports in place, a whole of family approach to mental health recovery is achievable.

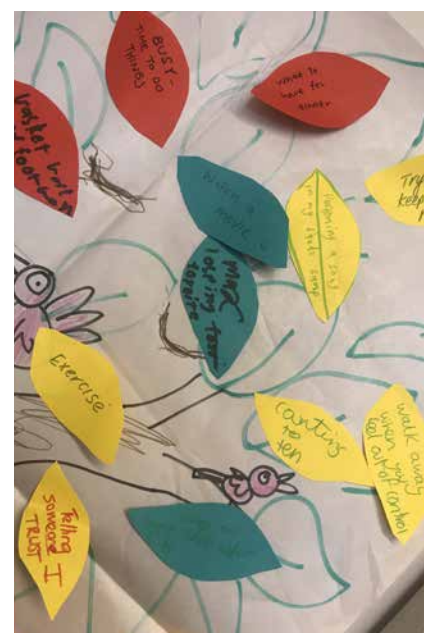
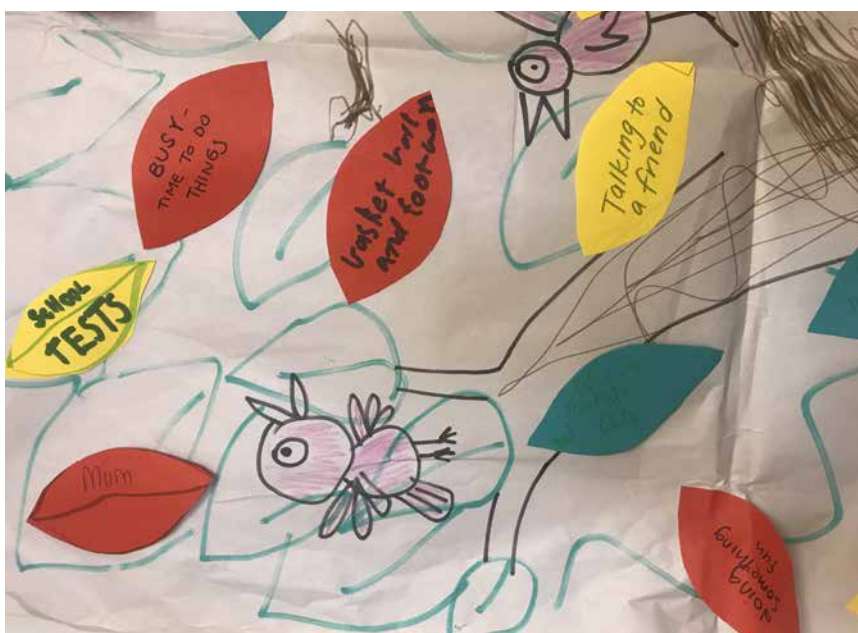
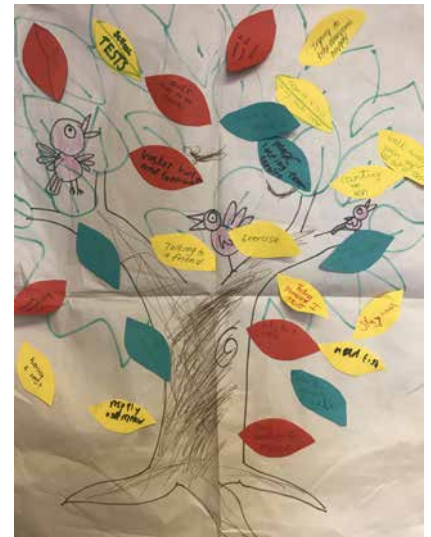
In concluding I also wanted to share with you all - that despite the trials and tribulations we as a family experienced, Jordan has completed his IT Degree and has been working in the industry, Matt has almost completed his psychology degree and Tom is an apprentice carpenter. I continue to work as a Peer Worker learning and sharing everyday with the hope that I can make the journeys of others that little bit easier for the whole family.

CHAMPS GROUP ACTIVITY - THE WORRY TREE

The CHAMPS Group provides children and their families with an opportunity to discuss mental health, stress and worries, to explore coping strategies and learn about supports available. The Worry Tree activity allows children and their parents to identify their stress, anxiety and worries and then to add things that help them cope.

Sharing these ideas in a peer support group helps children learn that they are not alone with their worries and that there are lots of positive coping strategies they can use. Some of the ideas from this group include: Talking to a friend, going for a walk, watching a movie, writing in my journal, exercise, counting to ten, basketball and football, and doing something fun.

What things help you if you are feeling stressed?



OCT 2ND - 4TH 2018
10AM - 4PM

LOCATION:
FLEMING PARK
COMMUNITY HALL
BRUNSWICK EAST

MUSIC ART AND SONGWRITING WORKSHOP

FREE
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
11 - 14 YRS WHO HAVE A PARENT
WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

YUMMY
FOOD
PROVIDED

A free, three-day music, art, and songwriting program where children and young people aged 11-14 **explore their creativity** in a supported environment. Facilitated by professional musicians, artists and Satellite staff, participants collaborate with one another to write and compose original songs, design album covers and **create connections with one another.**

Our musicians, artists, and facilitators are passionate about providing the opportunity for each and every child to **find their own voice.** A fun, safe and creative space allowing kids to connect with, and to explore, their personal and shared experiences.

Connecting children, young people and their families where a parent has a mental illness.

www.satellitefoundation.org.au

Hi

Contact us for more information

Rose Cuff
rose@satellitefoundation.org.au
0425 712 786

Henry von Doussa
henry@satellitefoundation.org.au
0402 353 410



Commonwealth Bank

