

AUTUMN
2021

We hope your year has started well and that the children are enjoying being back at school. Thinking about where we've been and where we are now in the COVID world prompts mixed emotions. In February, *The Conversation Australia* published an interesting article about parenting in a pandemic. It discusses how adversity can create accidental opportunities to build skills to endure ongoing or future hardship. It looks at the relationship between parental emotions and children's emotions, and how parents can help their children develop key social-emotional abilities in a variety of ways. It's worth a read. [Find the article here.](#)

We have some interesting activities for the school holidays and beyond, including how to make an easy fabric wreath and a warming autumn soup. We hear from Narissa, a community Rehabilitation Support Worker from LifeConnect. The book *Together Things* is reviewed by Elia Barresi and covers how to talk to children about mental illness.

If you have suggestions for articles to include in the newsletter, email us at fapmi@easternhealth.org.au.

Holiday activities & programs

Martial Arts as Therapy will hopefully run again in Term 2 (in the planning process as we speak). CHAMPS (a peer support and education group) will continue in Term 2 in Mitcham. Kids Club is an ongoing peer support group for children aged 8-12 years old and their parents/carers. It meets on the fourth Monday of every month.

Contact Bronwyn.Sanders@easternhealth.org.au for more information.

Space 4 Us drop in activity sessions and outings will run on 19 April and 17 May, from 4:30-6.30pm. These activities are supervised and open to young people aged 12-18 living in the Eastern suburbs. New members welcome.

Contact Michelle.Hegarty@easternhealth.org.au for more information.



Unsplash: Robert Collins

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SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

NGV Triennial

This is a large-scale exhibition featuring contemporary art, design and architecture from across the globe. That means 86 projects by more than 100 artists from over 30 countries.

At the National Gallery of Victoria until Sunday, 18 April 2021.

This is a FREE event but you need to book online: <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/triennial->



Knox Skate & BMX Park, Gilbert Park

Designed through extensive consultation with skaters and bike riders. It caters for beginners, intermediate and advanced riders/skaters.

Specific features include a euro gap, slide rails, a quarter pipe to vert pillar, 1.5m and 2.7m deep bowls, a 2.5m hemisphere cup, grind blocks to flat bank, a diamond fun box, stair rails, and a manual pad. Surfaces include concrete, granite and metal.

The park is open day and night, with lighting until 10pm.

Where: Ferntree Gully Rd & Gilbert Park Dr, Knoxfield
Customer Service: ph 9298 8000



Know Your Library

Monash Public Library Service

From African drumming to iPhone basics, there are plenty of activities on offer.

<https://www.monlib.vic.gov.au/Kids-Youth/School-Holiday-Program>

Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges Libraries

They have a range of free events and activities. The

website is accessible and easy to navigate. Check for your local library events.

<https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/whats-on/>

Whitehorse Manningham Libraries

There's everything from wool bombing to baby karaoke, or celebrate Star Wars Day on 4 May!

<https://www.wml.vic.gov.au/Events-directory>



The Get Active Kids Voucher Program helps eligible families get their kids involved in organised sport and recreational activities by reimbursing the cost of membership and registration fees, uniforms and equipment. Eligible children may be able to receive up to \$200 each.

Children must be aged 4 -18 and named on a valid Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card and Medicare card to be eligible. Find out if you can apply, what costs are covered, and how much you can be reimbursed.

<https://www.getactive.vic.gov.au/vouchers/>



MORE FUN THINGS TO GET OUT & DO

Little Brother, Big Sister

Little Brother, Big Sister is a theatre play which looks at the mental illness schizophrenia from a family perspective. Drawn from the writer's lived experience, this powerful play explores the relationship between siblings who grapple with managing this condition.

The playwright, Michel Tuomy, invites all people in the FaPMI program to attend the play. Before his own diagnosis, Michel's father was diagnosed with schizophrenia and the family lived with his father's mental illness. Michel wishes programs like those run by the FaPMI network were available when he was growing up.

The play is relevant to people in a similar personal or family situation. Michel is not only searching for answers to his own personal story, he's aiming to raise questions about the contemporary treatment of mental health.

The play may appeal to mental health workers, carers and consumers alike. A major ambition of the play is to make the diagnosis of a mental illness less of a fractured one, and one which can be properly understood by the general public. The play gives the lived experience of mental illness a human face - one shared with insight and empathy.

Don't miss the opportunity to attend the La Mama season of Little Brother, Big Sister.

Where: La Mama Courthouse Theatre, 349 Drummond St, Carlton

When: 25-30 May 2021

Book tickets online: www.lamama.com.au



Playwright Michel Tuomy (left) with actor Adam Cass, who plays Michel.



KIDS CLUB - 2021

Kids Club is a free ongoing peer support group for children aged 8-12 and their parents/carers in families where a parent has a mental illness.

The program runs monthly activities at Croydon EV1s Youth Centre, or an excursion to a recreational facility in the Maroondah/Yarra Ranges area. Sessions end with a free dinner for children and their parents/carers.

When: Mondays from 4:30-7pm

For referral information and dates contact:
Bronwyn 9871 3988 or Warren 0467 718 385.



CRAFT

A fun activity to do together. Make it as big or as small as you like!

materials

- a wire hanger
- lots of colourful material cut into strips

Autumn wreath



1) Cut fabric into 18cm pieces. You can use scraps from home or find suitable material from an op shop or fabric shop.



2) Carefully untwist a metal hanger and create a circle shape. It doesn't have to be perfect because it won't be seen.



3) Tie scraps of fabric to the wire with a simple knot. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to make a nature craft, so have fun!



4) Mix and match the colours, push the knots very close together, and twist the fabric around the wire to give the wreath dimension.



5) Once you have completely wrapped the wire, add a ribbon around the main frame and tie with a bow.

[Tricks + Treats: Autumn Fabric Wreath by Elise Blaha](#)



RECIPE

Pumpkin & sweet potato soup

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan and fry onion until transparent.
2. Add garlic, curry powder, pumpkin and sweet potato. Stir and fry for another minute.
3. Add the stock and simmer while covered for 20 minutes.
4. Let it cool a little and blend.
5. Return to the stove and add the coconut milk but don't boil, just heat until warm enough to eat.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste.

PREP: 15 minutes COOK: 35 minutes SERVES: 4

<https://www.bestrecipes.com.au>

ingredients

- 1 tbs oil
- 2 medium onions diced
- 1 garlic clove crushed
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 400g pumpkin diced
- 200g sweet potato peeled & diced
- 1L of vegetable stock
- 200g light coconut milk
- salt and pepper to taste



SMALL BUDGET? NO PROBLEM!

Cooking on a budget shouldn't mean canned beans and ramen noodles night after night.

Welcome to the world of delicious recipes designed for small budgets.

<https://www.budgetbytes.com>

Yarra Ranges Council NDIS and COVID survey



This survey is open to residents of the Yarra Ranges and anyone who accesses support within the region. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

We are interested in hearing from people within the disability community (including young carers of someone with a psychosocial disability/mental health challenges) about supports received in 2020 and what supports are needed in 2021.

survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GGZ5296>



BOOK REVIEW

Together Things

Authors: Michelle Vasiliu & Gwynneth Jones

Reviewed by: Elia Barresi, Peer Support Worker, Eastern Health

Talking about mental illness can be confronting, sad, frustrating and embarrassing; and that's just amongst adults. Talking to a child about mental illness can bring about confrontation and confusion, with no end in sight. Each family has their own journey. For mine, mental illness was treated like a dirty secret that no one spoke about.

When I was faced with raising my siblings (who essentially became my non-biological children), I had to find a way of talking to them about mental illness that would not be too frightening or confronting. It's safe to say I did not do this perfectly; I made mistakes, but I learnt that kids are incredibly resilient and have already formed their own narrative to understand the world around them. Reflecting back on this time, I wish I had more resources such as *Together Things* by Michelle Vasiliu and Gwynneth Jones. This book tells a beautiful story of the new learnings that can come from parenting with a mental illness.

Together Things follows a young girl recounting different adventures she has with her dad, who also has a mental illness. The story offers an insight into her inner world where she does fun things with her dad, but when he is unwell, they do different things together. It highlights the importance of connection and mutuality.

Although the main character is young, she shows understanding and wisdom towards her dad that seems beyond her years, and I think this can be said for many children of parents with a mental illness.

As a parent, your natural instinct is to shelter and protect your child from harm. This becomes muddled when you can't find the words to describe your inner conflict, and it can sometimes be reflected incorrectly.

This gorgeous book illustrates that these conversations don't have to be perfect; they don't even need to be in great detail. But kids know when



things are different and, left underacknowledged, this can become quite scary for them.

Not only does *Together Things* offer a sensitive and beautiful dialogue, it also offers lovely illustrations to match; perfect for afternoon story time, or as a guide on how to navigate tricky conversations. I highly recommend it!



Carer Engagement Activities

Belly dancing, painting, pampering, cooking and many more activities online.

For further information call 1300 971 720.

Email carereventseast@vmch.com.au



FaPMI COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FaPMI supports community development in local schools



On 16 December 2020, FaPMI coordinators Bronwyn Sanders, Michelle Hegarty and Justine Brogna attended Croydon Community School to hand over a \$2000 cheque donation to support the enhancement of their wellbeing program and initiatives. The school provides young people with an alternative secondary school experience in a nurturing environment.

Principal Bronwyn Harcourt and Wellbeing Coordinator Tahlia MacNab accepted the cheque on behalf of the school. The funds will go towards purchasing pod chairs for students that experience sensory difficulties or other mental health-related issues. The pods provide an opportunity for students to retreat to a private encapsulated space while at school.

The FaPMI program has facilitated a Space4Us group at the school and the donated funds were raised at a mental health awareness event 'Walk A Mile In My Shoes', which Justine is involved in organising.



Satellite Connect 4

A FREE six-week program for young people aged 17-23, anywhere in Australia, with a parent who experiences mental illness or mental health challenges.

Satellite Connect provides an exciting opportunity to build confidence, professional development skills and friendships. The program offers young people the chance to be heard and their experiences shared (if they wish) through a supported, positive and safe platform.

When: 3,10,17,24,31 May & 1 June 2021
Monday evenings from 6:30-8:30pm.

Visit www.satellitefoundation.org.au and follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to see and hear more about our work.



Public Speaking with Brad McEwan (via Zoom)

Monday 19 April, 7:00-8:30pm

Over 90 fun and engaging minutes, we are going to find out why public speaking isn't as scary as it's made out to be. Using simple tips and lots of stories, you'll discover how presenting to a crowd doesn't need to be something you endure, but something you enjoy. A lot!

Brad McEwan is a Satellite and Beyond Blue ambassador, a sports journalist, and tv and radio presenter.

SERVICE PROFILE: LIFECONNECT



Narissa is a community Rehabilitation Support Worker for LifeConnect.

'I work in suicide prevention' can be a bit of a conversation stopper at dinner parties. Suicide is simply not a topic many people are comfortable talking about, yet it's part of my day-to-day in the LifeConnect team and I find it incredibly meaningful. I believe it's a conversation we should have more often, to break down stigma around suicidality and mental health issues.

My work includes facilitating our Reach Out and Connect suicide prevention training. Our aim is to help people develop the skills and confidence to recognise when others may be at risk of suicide and respond supportively. The content is based on current research and was developed in consultation with people with a lived experience of the impacts of suicide.

We also run LifeSkills workshops to equip people with tools for moving through life's ups and downs with resilience. We cover topics like managing stress, responding to emotions and practising gratitude. I developed and run a mindfulness program too. I'm passionate about self-care so I love sharing practical tools and strategies for people to support themselves through challenging times. As we say within our team, 'You can't pour from an empty cup!'

I work alongside a team of counsellors who provide support for people who have lost a family member or loved one, or someone in their workplace, school or community group to suicide. We all feel it's a privilege to do this work, and we hope to support people to live well and reduce the risk and incidence of suicide in our communities.

LifeConnect services are available free of charge to people who live, work or study in the following areas: Banyule, Boroondara, Knox, Nillumbik,



Manningham, Maroondah, Mitchell (partial), Monash, Murrindindi (partial), Whitehorse, Whittlesea, and Yarra Ranges.

Ask about our Suicide Prevention or Support After Suicide programs at lifecconnect@neaminational.org.au or phone 1300 052 590.



Maggie Dent is one of Australia's much-loved parenting authors and educators. She's an advocate for kids and parents alike and is known for her common-sense approach to parenting.

Listen for free on the ABC listen app, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, or your favourite podcast app.

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/parental-as-everything-with-maggie-dent/>

Hang out at Space 4 Us!

Come and try something new...

This is a monthly gathering for you to connect with other young people who have a family member with mental health concerns.

You can meet new people, hear from others in similar situations, and can share experiences and learn new ways of looking after yourself.



IT'S A MONTHLY GATHERING – 4U!

Third Monday of each Month 4pm - 7pm
Starts Monday 15th February 4.30-6.30pm

FREE ACTIVITIES



Come along, hang out, chill out... that's totally fine!

Meet at EV's Youth Centre, Croydon from 4pm - there'll be something different each month - get creative, have fun, learn new stuff, share with others, challenge yourself...it's your call.

Some months we will have a group outing and dinner out.

Snacks and light dinner supplied - please let us know if you have any dietary requirements.

EV's Youth Centre
212 Mt. Dandenong Road, Croydon
Parking and public transport nearby

15 February - 15 March - 19 April - 17 May

For more information contact FaPMI Co-ordinator Michelle on
M: 0481 913 607 or fapmi@easternhealth.org.au

This monthly activity is fully supervised and open to young people aged 12 - 18 years living in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne