

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

2019 Winter Newsletter



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9 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday

or visit our website: www.cathsocservs.nzl.org

Donations for our work at Catholic Social Services may be sent to:

Catholic Social Services, P O Box 4237, Christchurch 8140

For direct credit donations please contact the agency on 379 0012

This Winter Appeal is sponsored by the Catholic Development Fund



even years on, Christchurch was again severely tested and passed the test again. As a community we showed compassion, understanding and unity, as individuals, more anxiety and grief was added to the mix; for many already struggling to manage emotional and material challenges life has become yet harder. Again the city got quiet while many were mourning; again the 'being under siege feeling' made most of us dig deep in search of strategies to cope and build resilience, a concept that has become a constant companion in people's minds over the past 8 years.

Many of our clients were affected and many new people in our community are looking for support. The agency already opened 523 new client files during the current financial year and no doubt there will be many more by the end of it.

There is much work and the workers are few but their commitment is firm and their drive to do their best to provide what is needed is strong. I hope there will be more financial support in future for the ones who provide services that are so important, often vital to those who can least afford them.

Many thanks to all who support the work of this agency; we all wish you well and hope your support will continue. Many thanks also to our Team for what they do and who they are for all and for each other.

We look forward to the coming spring with hope for a safe and less troubled city and a strong and united community.

God Bless

Jon Brian. Manager

Catholic Social Services distributes food to the needy.

Because of the increase in people needing help we
would be very grateful for
donations of non-perishable food
to help the agency support others.



Burn-out

Recently I took a break and had a special trip away with an old school friend. Apart from the fun to explore the world, I also knew I was in **need** of a break to prevent becoming burnt out. When I notice I become very cynical at the world, I now take note and organise a break.

Over the years of working in this field I am increasingly running into people who are suffering from Burn-out. Once this was mainly thought to only affect the high-power businessman. However, that is not true. I am getting people in my office from all walks of life; the business man, yes, but also the average person and even the at home mum.

When talking to these people the common denominator is, yes, working long hours; however, lots of people work very long hours and don't burn out. What seems to be more of significance is whether one has a past trauma or mental wellbeing stressor. Then add to that a current trigger/emotional stress and the big one: your personal level of resilience.

The 6 core resilience domains are:

Vision — Sense of purpose and goals **Composure** — Timely emotion regulation

Reasoning — Anticipating challenges and problem-solving skills **Tenacity** — Persistence and strong motivation **Collaboration** — Strong support networks and connection

Health — Quality sleep, nutrition, exercise.

So a guide of what to notice is:

Notice: Disconnection from purpose (Vision)

Do you find yourself wondering “what’s the point?” or “why bother!”, or just not caring anymore? Research shows that a strong sense of purpose, or Vision, is the most important factor in enabling resilience, so staying connected to your ‘why’ is important. However, the negative is if you have high expectations of being able to control factors that are not within your control.

TIP: Take a moment to write down what’s really under your control and what isn’t. Be realistic. This will help you keep perspective of the crucial role you play and why it matters to you, without overburdening yourself with unrealistic expectations.

Notice: Flaring emotions (Composure) Do you find yourself snapping at people, struggling to calm down, or highly emotional?

Consider how the nature of your work is impacting on you. Secondary trauma and compassion fatigue add up over time if you don’t take care of yourself. Emotional and physical exhaustion due to the number of the hours you are working and if you are

constantly on call takes a toll. So take a moment to consider how much you should really be able to bear, and recognise when your body and brain need a break. There are many practical skills you can develop, including simple but effective breathing exercises, or reappraising emotions. Again, we see expectations influence our reality. When facing an ambiguous situation (a situation that is neither positive nor negative), people that interpret situations more optimistically show decreased risk of depression.

TIP: Take a moment to notice your bias and if you automatically expect the worst. It might be time for a mental shift.

Notice: Losing touch (Collaboration)

Do you find yourself forever busy but more and more alone?

Loneliness has become more common. These days, lots of people don't have that close friend or two that they can truly open up to. If this sounds familiar think about why this is so. Is it because — between work and life admin — you have no time left for other people? Or maybe because you prefer the company of Netflix?

It's easy to sacrifice time with friends and colleagues to make time for everything else. But the ultimate price of loneliness is high and over time is a major health risk factor.

TIP: Reprioritise human connection and make the time to go out of your way to build relationships.

Notice: Fatigue and bad habits (Health)

Waking up tired? Feeling fatigued? Eating a lot of junk food?

If you are struggling to look after your physical health, it's helpful to consider why. Do you have free time and just don't feel like it? Or is it because you're so busy working that you literally don't have time to eat well, or get enough sleep and you can't exercise due to injury?

TIP: Remember that you don't have an invincible body. Just like you would tell your friends to look after themselves, you should take care of yourself physically. Maybe it means changing some bad habits. Maybe it means fighting for some time off.

Remember, you are human too.

So if you notice these risk-signs in yourself, it may be time to pause. If you notice these in colleagues around you, take a moment to check in with them.

Sue Murray, Counsellor & Group Facilitator

De-escalation tools for a low arousal approach when your child is in Chaos.

So what are challenging behaviours?

Challenging - a statement or an action that shows that somebody refuses to accept something.

Behaviour -The way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Challenging behaviours may be viewed as occurring in a cycle:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| * Trigger | * Escalation |
| * Crisis | * Recover |

We are challenged by our own lack of tools, skills and powerlessness. Sometimes people desire control to avoid anxiety. We judge instead of understanding.

Babies are born with the ability to mirror affect (emotional expression) and this is the basis of empathy development. For this reason if children mirror our affect then it is important to have self-control in order to lend someone else control of a situation.

The Calm approach for a disruptive, stubborn and out of Control child!

- ◆ Aim for self-control
- ◆ Keep calm – your calm is contagious
- ◆ Avoid dominating eye contact
- ◆ Calm voice - divert attention
- ◆ Keep your distance – don't corner the child
- ◆ Sit down when child is agitated
- ◆ Avoid touch
- ◆ Avoid marked body language
- ◆ Just waiting it out is often enough
- ◆ Ask other children or adults to leave if they are escalating the situation



Evaluate!

- ◆ What happened just before the crisis?
- ◆ What were our expectations for the child?
- ◆ Did the child fail to live up to expectations because of lack of support structures?
- ◆ Did adult behaviour trigger the crisis?
- ◆ How do we make sure it doesn't happen again?
- ◆ What strategies did the child use and were they O.K?
- ◆ Did the child have a chance to calm on their own?
- ◆ Did adult behaviour shorten or lengthen the crisis?
- ◆ Does the routine need to change to prevent it happening again?
- ◆ What is the action plan in case it happens again?

Karyn Devescovi, Counsellor

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the contributions made by our supporters:*

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TRAVELLERS PROGRAMME



A group programme for young people that builds resilience and help them face life and its challenges.

Young people today are experiencing change at a pace far more rapid than previous generations. The Travellers programme aims to support 9-12 year olds who may be experiencing issues that they are finding challenging and stressful.

The primary focus is to enhance connectedness and support young people to explore the changes they are experiencing and to develop ways to navigate their journey in a safe and adaptive way. **See back page for course dates.**



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Hi! I'm Lesley. One of the counsellors-in-training at Catholic Social Services this year. I work part-time as well as studying full-time at Vision College. Apart from enjoying working with people, I also love to be active, so tend to get around town on my bike as much as possible. I find that cycling to work or college or Catholic Social Services is a great way to set me up for the day. I think there are a few reasons for this.

One is the exercise; most of the time that I'm at work, studying or counselling I'm sitting down, so for me it's important to have some physical movement through the day. This not only helps me to keep fit-ish!!, but also sends all those wonderful endorphins (or 'feel-good' hormones) buzzing around my body.

I also love the connection with the weather – the fresh air, the breeze, the sun, and yep even that wind and rain (although perhaps I don't appreciate that biting southerly quite so much!). There is just something about being outside in nature that is so grounding for me – connecting directly with the changing seasons, even when we experience all four in one day!

The time on my bike also gives me some mental space; I can either be entirely present to what I am experiencing, what I'm seeing, feeling, sensing, smelling, hearing (a good bit of mindfulness!) or it's time to prepare for the day ahead. Although, yes I do also need to have my attention on what the traffic around me is doing as well!

I know cycling also drops my frustration levels. I don't enjoy sitting in a car stuck in traffic – and this way I can avoid that frustration – and there is so much satisfaction as I whizz past all that stationary traffic.



So that's four benefits without even beginning to talk about how cycling is better for the planet and better for my pocket as well. So let me encourage you to get out on your bike. It's a great way to start the day!

Lesley Smith, Student Counsellor

The Bigger Picture - Our Lives as Omelettes

I just watched the movie 'The Hundred Foot Journey' again. A movie about a clash of two cultures – French and Indian. An Indian restaurateur family flees India and settles in a small French village - opposite a 'Michelin' one star restaurant owned by a Frenchwoman. And she doesn't like them at all. So all hell breaks loose...

The Frenchwoman has one criteria – she judges the value of a chef by how the chef can make an omelette. And the Indian boy-chef teaches her how!!!

This got me thinking... We are all part of an omelette. And as one knows, to make one we have to break some 'eggs'.

Although one egg may have the perfect balance between the yolk and the albumen, it is still just an 'Egg'. Just one singular entity. Just like You and Me.

But by giving up the self, by giving up the restrictions and the beliefs and the limitations of our individual shells, by accepting that there are other 'eggs' out there, we become more than the sum of our 'Parts', and the sum of our 'Pasts'; we become One Whole Omelette; tastier, fluffier, spicier, more flavoursome than just one 'egg'.

If we can only accept that we are all human, that we are all part of a 'Whole World' – 'One Planet Earth', maybe, just maybe, we can have more peace. Because finally, we all are on just one planet – One flying 'Frying Pan'. And we are all individual 'eggs'. So we can either fry separately, or we can blend and integrate and accept one another. Because we are simply 'eggs'. All of us coming from the same source.

So let us acknowledge, respect and treat each other as 'Humans' and behave like we are human. Before we all fry together, or fry each other.

Melwyn Rodricks, Counsellor & Group Facilitator

PARENTING SPIRITED YOUNG PEOPLE



Sometimes it feels as if no matter how many books you read, people you talk to, or parenting programmes you watch, no-one seems to know the answers to the problems *you* face with your particular child. The Parenting Spirited Young People course on offer at Catholic Social Services is taking an alternative approach to looking at parenting by looking first at ourselves, as parents. Who are we? Why do we do the things we do? Why do we react to some things with such intensity? What have we learnt from our parents? This course covers topics such as personality styles, attachment, birth order, and the influence of the family tree, and how all of this impacts the way we parent our children. We explore anger and conflict, look at alternative ways to interact and communicate. We tap into our innate strengths and our own learning style to help support change – for both us as parents and our children. Suitable for parents of children from all age groups.

If you are interested please contact us. **See back page for dates.**

Facing Your Fears

What do you do when you and your child are in a cycle of anxious thoughts and oppositional and difficult behaviour?

Anxiety in children can take many forms. Our six-session course will help your children learn how to have Helpful thoughts and Brave behaviours, so they can feel as if they have control of their anxiety, rather than the other way round.

For Parents their six-session course (run simultaneously) will assist them in understanding more of what anxiety is all about for their children and themselves and learn how they can support their children in stopping the anxious cycle.

This is ideally suited for children aged 8-10 years but if the child is outside of this age group we can discuss the possibility of counselling.

See back page for course dates.



Food from home

Cooking as therapy is effective because it encourages sensory stimulation and creativity. Cooking a family favourite connects us to the past, to our memories, to our family, to friends, and sometimes connects us to mysterious lands never visited. It connects us to our stomach, to our body, to our living energy, to our senses.

Mee sua or wheat vermicelli soup is a Chinese comfort food, particularly for the Foochow people in Malaysia. It is what I crave on a wintery day when I miss my family and the tropical climate of my hometown.

Ingredients (Serves 2-4):

- 5 tbsp sesame oil
- 1-inch cubed ginger, sliced
- 6 chicken drumsticks
- 1-2 tbsp cooking *sake* or rice wine
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 10 pieces of dried shiitake mushrooms
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Wheat noodles



Method:

1. Heat a non-stick pot/pressure cooker, add sesame oil, ginger and chicken. Fry ginger until aromatic and chicken slightly brown.
2. Add chicken stock, sake and mushrooms.
3. Season to taste.
4. Simmer for an hour until mushrooms are soft and the chicken meat is falling off the bone. Or pressure cook for 30 mins.
5. Boil noodles until *al dente*. Strain noodles and rinse in cold water.
6. Place noodles in bowls, and pour chicken and mushroom broth over them, and enjoy while hot.



Irene Ng
(2nd year trainee counsellor)

Learning, Living, Loving

By Rachel Kerr, Student Counsellor

Sometimes it can be so easy to separate these three things.

Leaving learning to something we did at school, when we were children filled with hope. As we grow learning becomes a task, not a joy. No longer filled with love or with life.

Living becomes tiring, draining, simply a method to continue on each day. A splash of laughter here, and a bit of grief there, it all merges into an unintelligible blur as we breathe habitually, living a monotonous existence. No love to be found, no learning to be seen.

And love. Sometimes love becomes a burden, something we must carry, simply because we must. Because if we don't, who will? So we love but we forget to live. To learn.

We forget to laugh.

I've lived through many of these moments in my short life. The pain. The tired. The trauma. But also the joy.

Oh the joy.

The joy when love and life coincide. The hope when painful history is remade, enriched with hope, with love and with life.

So hold onto this life dear ones. Onto love. Onto learning.

For if we forget to love we forget to live, and if we forget to live, we forget to learn and to grow past our pain and suffering. We forget how to laugh. To have joy.

We feel as if we are alone.

But we aren't alone. Not really.

We are loved, by those we do know and those we don't yet know.

We have life, for it moves through our lungs and bodies every moment, of every day.

We have potential, because it is never too late to learn.

So hold onto love, to living, to learning; because love holds onto you.

And oh, how it will never let you go.

Take heart dear one, for you are beloved.



GROUP PROGRAMMES 2019

Term III

Travellers Programme

Thursdays

25 July—05 September
4.00 pm—5.30pm and runs for seven weeks.

Parenting Spirited Young People

Wednesdays

07 August - 11 September
9.30 am-12 noon and runs for six weeks

Seasons for Growth for Adults

Fridays

02 August - 23 August
9.30 am—12 noon and runs for four weeks

CREAM

Tuesdays

20 August - 24 September
9.30 am—12 noon and runs for six weeks

Term IV

Facing Your Fears

Thursdays

17 October - 21 November
4.00 pm—5.30 pm and runs for six weeks

Parenting Spirited Young People

Wednesdays

23 October - 27 November
9.30 am-12 noon and runs for six weeks

Seasons for Growth for Children

Tuesdays

22 October - 10 December
4.00 pm—5.00 pm and runs for eight weeks

CREAM

Tuesdays

05 November - 10 December
9.30 am—12 noon and runs for six weeks

"Really helped me through some tough times and I learnt techniques and skills to help me in the future".

"The Counsellor gave us some great advice and support which allowed us to grasp our situation and to work together".

"A very respectful and professional Service, where I was confident that I could speak honestly and that our discussions were confidential".

"Felt safe, very respectful, a calming environment. The strategies were exactly what we needed. Very professional and patient."