

Carer Chatter

Autumn 2025: newsletter for families & carers of people with a mental illness

Bendigo Health Mental Health & Wellbeing Services Carer Support Team

Hello and welcome to our autumn newsletter.

Autumn again, a season of change. Some changes, such as the weather, are beyond our control, and the best we can do is to be as prepared as possible. We can take actions such as carrying a jacket or umbrella when it's cold; and wearing sunscreen, drinking lots of water and seeking shade when it's hot. This will help us manage, but ultimately we can only accept and adjust to what is happening around us.



However, there are other changes that *are* in your control. Change can be a little scary but there are benefits to trying new things, learning new skills and meeting new people. Comfort zones can provide a sense of security, so it can be easy to think that if you stay where you are nothing will change. But this doesn't make sense.

Things change all the time, both around us and within us. What feels comfortable may actually be a rut. Not necessarily bad, but maybe not what's best either.

Being a carer can be very rewarding, and it may be a major part of your life. Are there also other things that you can do that will bring you joy and satisfaction? Take some time for yourself to think about what else you would like your life to include, and what changes you might make for those dreams to happen.

For example, if you would like more support and social activities, then you could try joining a group in your area. Carer support groups are a great way to get support and make some new friends. Or perhaps you would like to learn or improve a skill. Look for classes or clubs that interest you, book in for some lessons, or go along to a community garden or workshop.

Do something you enjoyed in the past, or branch out and try something completely new. It's up to you.

Start small and remember that if you try something and it doesn't work for you, you will still have learnt something from the experience.

Best wishes from Faye and Kelly



To ponder ...

In just two days from now, tomorrow will be yesterday.

Why is it that night falls but day breaks?

You can be an optimist and carry a raincoat.

Why are goods sent by ship called CARGO, and goods sent by truck called a SHIPMENT?

A bargain is something you don't need, at a price you can't resist.

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Experience is something you don't have until just after you need it.

Why do noses run and feet smell?

A man doesn't know what he knows until he knows what he doesn't know.

Why do your fingers have fingertips but your toes don't have toetips?

And why can you tiptoe but not tipfinger?

A smile is a curve that can set things straight.

Why do people believe you when you say there are 4 billion stars,
but check when you say the paint is wet?

If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.

Why is that we say 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up every 2 hours?

If you can smile when things go wrong, you probably have someone in mind to blame.

Why do doctors 'practice' medicine? Shouldn't they know how?

Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's acorn that held it's ground.

How come Tarzan doesn't have a beard?



To celebrate ...

We are thrilled to be able to share some great news about one of our carers. Helen Wilson is a full-time carer for her husband David. She dabbled in woodwork in the 90's and 2000's. In 2018 her children bought her a lathe as a gift, and she has been enjoying woodwork as a regular hobby since then.

She recently entered a piece of her work in the Echuca Show. The redgum she used was donated by a friend on the proviso that she "showed up the fellas!"

Helen won her event which was '*Article of Woodcarving*'. She also won the overall prize '*Annual Champion of the Echuca Show*'.



The Sherrin Football Trophy pictured here took her 6 days to make.

Stage one was the football which is composed of 6 pieces of timber glued together. This was then shaped over 3 days. The final details took another 3 days of polishing, engraving and adding real leather for the lacing.

Helen has many other creative outlets including lawn bowling and volunteering at bowling events, fishing with her husband David, supporting the 'Riding for the Disabled' program and crocheting to her hearts content.

Helen is a passionate advocate for carer support, health and wellbeing. She is an integral part of our Echuca Carers Group, and is a friend and support to many.

Carers walk and talk group

It has been five years since this group first began in February 2020. The group got off to a rocky start with covid lockdowns beginning shortly after. However, we pushed through and went from strength to strength. The group now meets once a month at the lovely lake Weeroona. A great group of carers walk together, talk together, support each other and share a laugh. We are joined by Rohan, the Bendigo Health Spiritual Care Adviser, who brings compassion and joy to our group. We had 13 carers at our last walk and are always ready to welcome new carers. We walk in all sorts of weather, from hot sun to cold rain. Some days we walk faster than others, and sometimes we walk at different paces as some like to set a cracking pace, while others prefer to stroll. We all get there in the end and enjoy the morning tea and shared laughter afterwards.



Family & Carer Support Groups

Bendigo Family, Friends & Carers Group: 5454 7612

Bendigo Walk and Talk group: 5454 7612

Cohuna Mental Health Carers: 0407 316 183

Campaspe Mental Health Carers Group: 5482 0606

Family Drug Support: 1300 368 186

Kerang Mental Health Carers: 5452 1200

Macedon Ranges/Gisborne - P.S. My Family Matters: 0475 269 965

Maryborough & Districts Mental Health Carers Support Group: 0428 378 583

Rochester Carers: 0401 406 881

Wycheproof Carers: 0428 935 275

Important phone numbers

Bendigo Health Mental Health & Wellbeing

Triage Service: 1300 363 788

Mental Health Carer Support Team: 5454 7612

Carer Gateway: 1800 422 737

Mental Health & Wellbeing Resource Library

(8 Olinda St): 5454 7670

Carers Victoria: 1800 242 636

Family Drug Support helpline: 1300 368 186

Head to Health: 1800 595 212

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA):

1300 947 820

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

Lifeline (24 hours): 13 11 14

Mensline: 1300 789 978

Mental Health and Well-being Connect Centres:

1800 979 730

MIND Carer helpline: 1300 554 660

Useful internet sites

Bendigo Health

www.bendigohealth.org.au/

Beyond Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au/

Carer Gateway:

www.carergateway.gov.au/

Carers Victoria: www.carersvictoria.org.au/

Children of People with a Mental Illness:

www.copmi.net.au

Eating Disorders Victoria:

www.eatingdisorders.org.au

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA):

www.imha.vic.gov.au

Loddon Mallee Mental Health Carers Network

www.lmmhcn.org.au/

Mental Health & Wellbeing Commission:

www.mhwc.vic.gov.au

Mental Health & Wellbeing Connect Centres:

www.mindaustralia.org.au/services/loddon-mallee-mental-health-and-wellbeing-connect

Sane Australia: www.sane.org/

Tandem Carers: www.tandemcarers.org.au

Wellways: www.wellways.org/

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