



SUPPORT FOR DAY TO DAY LIVING
IN THE COMMUNITY
(D2DL)

WINTER 2011

Day2Day NEWS

Greetings—in this issue: Overcoming Isolation




Isolate—to separate or put apart from others.

Many people may find themselves living in isolation, cut off from their community, friends and family, going for days without seeing or speaking to another person. There are life events that can bring about your circumstance of being alone, eg death of a loved one, loss of a relationship, the onset of mental illness or relapse...the list goes on.

We know of the Hollywood actress, Greta Garbo, famous for saying “I want to be alone”. A certain amount of solitude is necessary to grieve, reflect and rest, but too much time alone can be detrimental to your health and wellbeing.

It may well be a chemical imbalance, yet it feels like a sickness of the heart and soul, causing you to take to your bed, like an injured animal gone to ground. You may be buffeted by incessant, negative thoughts or dealing with fatigue (a major symptom of depression), feeling that it takes too much effort to talk. You may be too afraid to



answer the door or telephone, too afraid to go out. You may be out, yet feel disconnected from everyone because you are stuck in a bubble or behind a pane of glass. You may feel lost, that you’ve lost yourself, that you are “alone at sea”. 

...continued

But you can find yourself again. And it is people who can help you to do that, through their support and caring for you. Through their knowledge, compassion, encouragement, companionship, conversation and counsel. Their insight and guidance can help you to bring about necessary change. There is nothing as healing as wisdom. And, by sharing your thoughts, you clear out your mind.

How profoundly disconnected we feel when we are “not ourselves”. To feel that you do have a bond with other people can bring healing and put you on the road to recovery. We are forever connected to other people because we are all part of the human race.

Reach out to someone, trust someone, let someone in.



From the depths and back...pages 6 & 7

People share about their experience of isolation and what has helped them overcome it.

The theme for the next Newsletter is:

“Happy Days”

Please send us your thoughts and articles: fun things, good places

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We'd love to hear from you



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What is Social Isolation?



Isolation can mean one of two things: social isolation, or emotional isolation. Often, they co-occur.

Social isolation is an actual physical isolation from other people, or the lack of close friends generally. Socially isolating oneself can mean staying home for days, not talking with friends or acquaintances, and generally avoiding contact with other people. It can also mean that, even if contact with other occurs, it is superficial and brief, while more meaningful, extended relationships, and especially close intimacy, is missing. Social isolation is potentially both a cause and a symptom of emotional or psychological challenges. For example, feeling depressed, inadequate, or anxious can lead us to isolate; isolation can then increase feelings of loneliness and depression, fear of other people, or a negative self-image. Relationships are necessary for our well-being, but they also may trigger our negative feelings and thoughts. Breaking a cycle of isolation is a difficult but necessary part of recovery from emotional distress.

Emotional isolation, which may include or result in social isolation, usually involves emotional withdrawal from other people, meaning we keep our feelings to ourselves completely, we are unable to receive emotional support from others, we "shut down" or feel numb, and we cannot or do not communicate with others, except perhaps for the most superficial matters (for example: "close the door, shut the light and leave me alone").

Therapy can help deal with the emotional and psychological issues that can lead to isolating behaviours.

It is important to note that sometimes, both kinds of isolation may not be a choice; that is, people may be socially or emotionally isolated even though they report wanting to have friends, wanting to engage emotionally, and wanting to have a support network, but for some reason are unable to make those connections – perhaps because they do not know how, have a pattern of dysfunctional relationships that cause people to separate from them, or are simply too afraid or anxious to form new relationships.

In such cases, a therapist can help learn social skills, uncover the causes of dysfunction in relationships, and support a person emotionally as he or she builds a support network.



It is important to distinguish the un-healthy experience of isolation from the healthy and necessary experience of occasional solitude. Having time alone is an important part element of emotional maturity; we need alone time to sort through our thoughts, distress from a busy day, and, in demanding world of seven billion people, restore a connection with our own needs, goals, beliefs, values and feelings. Solitude becomes isolation when (unless joining a monastery or similar spiritual group):

- We avoid people for an extended period (more than a day or two)
- We avoid people out of fear or depression
- We avoid people out of fear of being abandoned, or out of a sense of shame or low self-worth
- We avoid people to the detriment of our important social or professional relationships
- We don't feel better by spending time alone, or if we do, it is only that our anxiety about being around people is quelled.

Extract from www.goodtherapy.org

"You don't just wake up one day and decide: 'I think today I will isolate myself'...it is something that creeps up on you, and before you know it you are entrenched."





Experiences of Isolation



Sometimes we become isolated without realising it. A bit of time to ourselves when extended, can leave us stuck home alone. Some of our people shared how they realised they had become socially isolated:

- It was like being a prisoner in my own home because I had to take care of kids
- Being depressed and unmotivated to do anything
- No one to visit, didn't see much of anyone
- I was spending most of my time on my own
- Sickness, breaking point
- When I saw my friends I talked too much, stayed too long or didn't want to leave
- Felt lonely
- When I didn't know who to call or where to go
- Realised hadn't seen people for a while
- Mum called and said she hadn't seen me for ages
- Enclosed in my own company, started out as respite/time out but then I was stuck
- Lost friends through death and retirement
- Preferred my own company, to be home alone, but then couldn't get out
- Avoided friends, stopped answering the phone as too hard to talk to others.

They also described what it felt like for them when they were isolated:

- I felt alone and worried and alone and depressed
- I felt like I was missing out
- I felt terrible, I felt like I wasn't one of them anymore
- Felt like the outside world doesn't want to know me
- On my own in the big blue sea
- Very low feeling; don't see any light at the end of the tunnel
- Didn't feel like my needs mattered
- Only contact I had was at the local supermarket
- Feelings of detachment from everyone and everything
- Didn't feel connected to other people, didn't want to see or talk to anyone. I was scared of people. I was constantly in a "bubble".
- Felt pressured when around people, exhausted when they leave. It's too tiring to hold a conversation, even superficial chatter is hard
- Feel I have to be happy and obliged to be part of other person's world
- Can't relate to them, they don't understand what's going on inside me and I can't put it into words
- Don't want to impose my depressed self on others, as would pull them down and dampen social get togethers, so don't go
- Don't know what to say to others, nothing to share, have done nothing of interest so conversation is hard
- Stuck in a bubble; there, but can't connect with other people
- A thick wall separates me from others
- Lost in a glass maze, can see what is happening, but don't know which way to go
- Feel I am odd, different, not "normal"
- Don't know the rules anymore on how to socialise
- Easier to stay quiet, to say little
- Feel judged – not contributing so not worth anything, feel a failure.

I Know That Place

That void where laughter never shines,
Where sorrow slinks like creeping vines,
That dreadful pit you cannot face ...
Oh yes, my friend - - - I know that place.

That crevice where the wounded hide,
Where anguish festers 'neath the tide,
That emptiness you can't embrace ...
Oh yes, it's true - - - I know that place.

That hole where darkness swallows light,
Where terror crawls through birthing night,
That hollow fear you can't erase ...
Oh yes, indeed - - - I know that place.

That chasm that consumes the mind,
Where "what if's" play in slow rewind,
That endless loop you can't outrace ...
Oh yes, I fear - - - I know that place.

That room where you feel all alone,
Where seeds of woe are strewn and thrown,
Look through the haze, you'll see my face ...
You're not alone - - - I know that place.

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"When I am unwell and find it difficult to get out, even having a conversation is really hard".



Artwork by Ashley



Decline into Isolation

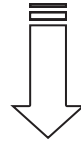


Life events or illness interrupt normal activities and social contacts
 Self imposed withdrawal, choosing some time out
 Start to stay inside more
 Start to miss regular activities and contacts



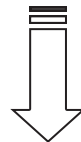
Listen to other's concerns re your time out becoming isolation
Keep up your daily routine
Share with someone what you feel
Keep up regular contact
Plan outings with a friend
Do something for someone else

Plan/decide to reduce outings
 Tend to bulk shop or buy online
 Lose daily routine
 Increasingly avoid people, conversation too hard
 Increase distractions eg TV, books, music, DVDs
 Increased excuses to stay home and avoid others
 It's easier on my own, feel safer at home
 Pretend to be OK as people don't understand
 Tired of putting on a happy face



Push yourself to see other people
Set small goals, aim to get out for short periods of time, plan for time out or escape if it gets too much
Re-develop a daily routine
*See how much you can do in **just 5 minutes** eg dishes, vacuuming*
Self talk—focus on what you can do!

Less energy, stay in bed longer, no reason to get up
 Not going out so no reason to shower
 Put off tasks eg dishes, housework, shopping
 Can't explain to others why can't be bothered
 Feel as though in a bubble, separate from the world
 Less interest in the distractions
 Increased boredom and depression
 Don't want to be a burden to others, pull them down



Keep on going...
If you don't succeed one day, try again the next

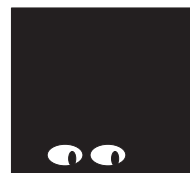
Be real/yourself with one person
Set small goals, plan to do just one thing each day
Plan your shower - put out clothes, play music, warm up the bathroom,
Don't be hard on yourself if you don't make it, just aim to try again
Push yourself out of comfort zone to start change and create new habits
Self talk—I am capable, I can do this

Unable to get motivated for anything
 No longer a choice, I am trapped
 Swamped with negative self-talk
 Feel useless, hopeless, worthless
 Increasingly push people away
 Pick arguments or retreat in silence
 Don't know why I feel the way I do
 Wear so many masks have lost sense of who I really am
 Can't answer the phone or the door
 Hard even to get out the door to the letter box
 Feelings of failure and guilt
 Other people are better off without me



Do one thing each day that helps
Speak to your GP
Call/reach out to one person who believes in you
Get out of bed in the morning
*Aim to achieve just **one** thing today*
*Self talk—this dark time **will** pass*

Problems compound...
 Deep depression
 Anxiety, panic attacks
 (vomiting, sweating, shaking)
 Social phobia
 No connection to other people
Stuck in a black hole....



You can get un-stuck!!!
Try one small step to get out and move up



Journey Out of Isolation




They say “lightning never strikes twice.”

More often than not, for people who suffer from mental illness this is not the case. One of the major drawbacks of being mentally ill is one of feeling socially isolated.

In my case it really began for me when I was just entering my teenage years. It was like someone flicked a switch and I found that I did not enjoy playing outside with the other neighbourhood kids anymore. I found myself preferring my own company for no real reason. Throughout my teenage years I had a few friends (mainly school mates) but no real lasting friendships. I did however keep in contact with one friend, but as I entered my 30's he succumbed to drugs and alcohol, and to this day he barely remembers me.

As with everyone, I went to work and I enjoyed what I did for a living, though I worked long hours and threw myself into work as much as I could to provide for my family (my wife Jessica). But it all took a toll as the more I wanted to provide, the more work I did. The end result was that I suffered a mental breakdown after a long decline in my health and wellbeing. It was at that time that isolation was not a choice, but forced upon me. I did not know what to do, I had no real friends to speak of to help me and it was up to Jessica and my mum to look after me; something that I felt ashamed of and it just added to my depression, as I viewed my situation as if I had failed everyone.

In the years that followed I have tried different things to be as sociable as I could. But I found no real connection with anyone. I told myself that I should enjoy my own company before I can enjoy someone else's and to be content with what I had. I had to learn the skills to be in social situations and to this day it still doesn't come easily; mainly due to having Asperger's Syndrome and depression. Three years ago I did find friends with a family in the USA; though it was rewarding it too came to a bitter end late last year which put me back into hospital. I came to the same conclusion that I was better off on my own and not try to connect with anyone. However, being involved with PHaMS and Day to Day Living has in fact showed me that having friends is possible.

I have recently made new friends from this newsletter group and I enjoy the building of these newsletters. Though I am still afraid at times, I attempt to overcome my isolation with looking forward to these meetings each week and getting out of the house more. I volunteer one day a week and that also helps break the isolation I would otherwise feel. I have found that there is a fine line between isolation and being content with one's own company. That line is often blurred all too easily; I can feel isolated in a crowded room or just in my own home, the result is the same. The feeling of uneasiness that comes with social situations is just as strong. 

I don't think that there is an easy solution to being isolated, but there are some easy steps that one can take to help alleviate some symptoms of isolation. Things like attending one on one or small groups, having an exit strategy, try to get out the house at least once a week even if it's to do the shopping. All of these I have found help me get out into the community more. The more I do (in moderation) the more I have found that my isolation has decreased, even if it's for a day, I consider it a good day for me.

Regards
Ashley

The future depends on what we do in the present.
- Mahatma Gandhi

The Bug Man

Alan has struggled for many years with severe anxiety and depression, as well as the social isolation that has resulted. In recent times Alan's isolation has also increased due to taking on the role of Carer for his elderly parents.

Despite these challenges Alan continues to push himself out the front door, and to go places where he mixes with other people. For many years he has had an interest in stick insects and has taken up breeding them. He has found that taking a couple of his “bugs” out, happily perched on his shoulder or hat, provides a great talking point and valuable connection with others. While some people are a little wary of the strange insects, others take the opportunity to ask questions and Alan is delighted to share his knowledge about what they eat, their life span, breeding, and what they are like as pets. Did you know for example, that they take on the color of the food they eat? If they eat pink rose petals, for example, they can take on a pinkish color.

Facing people is really difficult when you feel down, alone or anxious. What a great idea, to find “common ground”, whether it be your pet dog or “bug”, young children, or your footy team colors, in order to connect with other people. Well done Alan!





Overcoming Isolation



Living with isolation was one of the worst times of my life.

I don't remember how it happened to me, it just did, and it was one of the hardest things I have ever had to overcome. The worst thing being that my home became my prison, and the fear I felt every time I tried to leave.

I would become ill just going out to check the letter box. I would send my husband to the shops each day to get what we needed and I would just stay home. I would only leave the house for a doctor's appointment or our once a fortnight big shop. My husband would get upset because I would become so sick and scared it was a nightmare for me. I had no-one to talk to about it and the few people that were in my life couldn't understand what was wrong with me.

My doctor became concerned and I was referred to EACH Day to Day Living about 1½ years ago. She knew I needed help and EACH came just at the right time for me, as I had given up hope of ever being well.

I was encouraged to go to a social group that was on a Thursday afternoon. It was very hard for me, not only did I have to leave the safety of my home but I would have to spend time with a group of strangers. But I knew it was time for me to try anything.

The people were warm and welcoming but I was still very scared and at times worried if I would be able to stay, but little by little I began to feel comfortable there.

When this group stopped I was asked if I would like to do a computer course, so I gave it a try and once a week for 8 weeks I went, and about halfway through found myself enjoying it and was surprised when I completed it.

It was during this course I found out about the Newsletter group and soon after this became a part of my routine and a part of my recovery.

I have completed a Break Free from Anxiety course that helped me by showing me ways to cope better when feeling stressed and some of the ideas from that course helped me to complete 2 others. In the 1½ years I have been with EACH I have learnt many helpful ideas from others going through the same thing as me, and have helped me with my fears of leaving my home.

I still attend the Newsletter group. I have separated from my husband so I now do my shopping on my own, and with the help of a mental health nurse I get out and about to different places.

When I look back and I see how far I have come I feel positive about the future.

Regards, Colleen



When I woke this morning
I couldn't face the day
I didn't want to get up
I wanted the world to fade away.

Don't want to pretend I'm happy
Yet sick of feeling sad
Tired of all the angry thoughts
that make me really mad.

Can't let people see me
because of how I feel inside
and tired of faking a happy face
to use as a shield to hide.

Sometimes I just start crying.
My tears don't want to stop
and I just want to tell the world
please just let me off.

I never know how long I'll feel
the way I do today
and hope and pray tomorrow
these fears will fade away.

I tell myself be happy,
these fears will go away
and try and make the best of things
so I'll make it yet again.

When I wake up tomorrow
don't let me feel this way.
Help me want to get up
so I can face a brand new day.

By Colleen



Overcoming Isolation



Our people who shared about their experience of social isolation also shared what they have found helpful in overcoming it:

- Ask for help from friends, family, support workers—it can help if they also increase their understanding of what you are going through
- Try to express my feelings so they don't build up inside
- If face to face is too hard, keep in touch by texting friends, email, Facebook etc.
- You have to take the first step, push yourself out of your comfort zone
- Take small steps to start with, that help break the ice again
- Plan your outing so you can succeed (where going, know the exits, set realistic time you stay, know where to escape to if it becomes too much)
- If someone wants you to go somewhere you find too daunting, don't just say no, suggest something or a place you do feel comfortable with, or arrange to go only for a short time that you think you can manage OK.
- Going out rather than having people come in to my house as it's messy and I feel embarrassed; I don't feel up to cooking or being hospitable in my home
- Don't beat yourself up—if I don't succeed in getting out it just increases my sense of failure. Just focus on trying again.
- Link up with groups where others are managing similar problems eg D2DL, Rivendell, Lifeworks, Halcyon, so you can regain your confidence
- Establish a routine eg swimming on Monday morning, walking on Tuesdays, shopping Wednesdays, etc.
- Link up with a "buddy" to go walking, to the movies, or for a cuppa on a regular basis, encourage one another.
- As soon as negative thoughts or focus on the difficulties take over it is like the plug is pulled on my motivation and energy, suddenly have shifted to "can't go out, it's just not going to happen". Have to challenge the negative thoughts before they sap away my energy
- Talk yourself through the fear, replace the fearful negative thoughts by re-focusing on the benefits of going.
- Recognise the difference between being alone/content/time out, and when you are becoming isolated, eg stop seeing friends or taking phone calls, and push yourself out before it gets too bad
- If you don't succeed in getting out, set yourself another goal to achieve, perhaps an easier one you can succeed at.
- Define what recovery is to you, it might not mean you go back to everything you used to do, but allow you to operate with what you **can** do.
- Use affirmations, positive self-talk eg "I can do this", "I have done this before, and can do it today", "This fear will pass"
- Anticipate your reactions, observe what is going on in your thoughts, feelings and responses—this gets you halfway to overcoming the difficulties.

Helpful hints from people who have been there...

If you didn't succeed today, do try again tomorrow. Don't give up. Be kind to yourself. Don't beat yourself up if you sometimes don't succeed in getting out.

Don't push yourself beyond what you can achieve today.

Do it at the pace that works for you

Do let in the people who truly care for you, don't shut them out.

In Times Of...

My soul drifts aimlessly in times of hopelessness.
It searches tirelessly for meaning and truth ...
Yet finds no direction.

My heart bleeds quietly in times of loneliness.
It yearns to find warmth and happiness ...
Yet it somehow eludes me.

My eyes seek out visions in times of want.
They gaze endlessly through the blackness that envelops them ...
Yet they cannot see the light.

My ears listen earnestly in times of silence.
They search for familiar sounds to comfort and console ...
Yet they cannot penetrate the darkness that surrounds me.

My arms reach out frantically in times of despair.
They seek strength and compassion to enfold me ...
Yet they find nothing substantial to enwrap.

My mind cries out desperately in times of solitude.
It poses intense questions that demand answers ...
Yet there are none to be found.

My hand reaches out earnestly in these times of confusion.
It dials the number of a familiar and calming voice ...
And gratefully, my lifeline to sanity ... remains intact.

*by Kit McCallum @ 2000
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Famous People and Anxiety

These famous people suffered and conquered Anxiety and Social Phobia:

Donny Osmond

American singer, Donny Osmond, who had his first major hit *Puppy Love* in 1972 and starred in the TV show *Donny and Marie* from 1976-1978 suffers from anxiety. Donny had stage fright and experienced a panic attack during a performance in 1994. The panic attacks prevented him from singing and made him believe he was going to black out. Donny was scared of shopping centres as he thought people might gather around to ridicule him. Donny sought assistance from a psychologist and engaged in cognitive behavioural therapy. *Life Is Just What You Make It: My Story So Far* by Donny Osmond and Patricia Romanowski

Barbara Streisand

American Singer/actress/director Barbara Streisand's social phobia prevented her from singing in public for twenty seven years. Whilst giving a concert in Central Park, New York in 1967, Streisand forgot the words to several songs. From then on, Streisand was worried that she might make embarrassing mistakes again if she performed in public and therefore totally avoided such engagements. Streisand learnt to cope with her stage fright and gave a comeback tour in 1994. She gradually exposed herself to her fear of performing live, starting with a smaller warm up show, then a national tour and then performing in front of a large television audience. The gradual accumulation of positive responses to her performances led to a change in Streisand's thinking.

Sir Laurence Olivier

Actor Laurence Olivier developed social phobia when at the peak of his career. At the time he was both acting in and directing a play at the National Theatre, London. The problem started when he began thinking that he might be too tired to recall his lines. Olivier recounts in his autobiography that he suffered from social phobia for five years.

Susie O'Neill

Commonwealth gold medallist, Queensland swimmer Susie O'Neill has had to overcome anxiety in order to fulfil her potential as an athlete. In an interview for the *Australian Womens. Weekly*, November 1998, Susie spoke of how her anxiety had impacted upon her ability to perform as a swimmer. In the early days she dreaded ever winning in case it meant she had to stand on the dais and be the centre of attention. Then she'd pray she wouldn't be chosen for a team event because she was terrified of trying to talk to people she didn't know.

Rebecca Gibney

Australian actress, Rebecca Gibney, who has starred in the *Flying Doctors*, *Come In Spinner*, *Halifax FP* and *Altogether Now* has had to contend with debilitating panic attacks too. In an interview in *new idea* 7/9/96 dealing with panic attacks Rebecca said she did not understand what was happening to her when she walked off the set of *Halifax FP* in uncontrollable tears, anxious she would not remember her lines. Then again at the *Logie Awards* in 1996, the stress an anxiety took hold and she was overcome with nausea and shortness of breath, pacing the foyer and unable to take her seat.

Gary Mc Donald

Australian actor, Gary McDonald who has starred in the *Norman Gunston Show*, *Mother and Son* had experienced social phobia and panic attacks.

Simon Palomares

Australian actor/comedian - *Wogs Out of Work*, *Acropolis Now* - has experienced social phobia and panic attacks.

Kim Basinger

American, Oscar winning actor, Kim Basinger is reported to suffer from panic, agoraphobia and social phobia. When she accepted her Oscar, again the words wouldn't come, even though she had been practising a response for days. Basinger related how she could trace her anxiety disorders back to childhood. As a child her worst fear was being asked to read aloud to the class. Her fear of school was such that teachers thought she was having a nervous breakdown. Basinger has had psychological therapy for her anxiety and apparently it has been the solution to her problems.

Extracts from www.socialanxietyassist.com.au

Everything you do is by choice.
It may not seem it, but it is.
If you remove the expression
"I have to..."
And replace it with
"I choose to..."
You will see
A whole different perspective on your life.

Louise L. Hay



Getting Out and About



Walking Works



Want to walk but put off by the cold? We can't make it warmer but we do have some handy tips to get you psyched up to get out there.

Layer up – wear multiple layers of clothing to ensure you start off warm and toasty. You'll probably find as you get going, you'll be stripping some off in no time. Take a waterproof coat or umbrella to keep you dry.

Keep the pace up – a brisk speed will get your blood moving, making you warmer quicker.

Have kissable lips – protect your lips from getting dried out in the cold winds by wearing lip balm.

Better together – walk with a friend and see how the time flies. Go as a group, keep together or stop at intersections so no one gets lost. Have other's mobile phone numbers ready in your mobile.

Keep the volume low – if listening to music while you walk, keep the volume down so that you stay aware of your surroundings.

See and be seen – stick to well-lit paths in the darker months, you'll be able to see where you're going and be visible to car drivers and cyclists.

Be a hothead – keep your head warm and the rest of you will be too – wear a hat and scarf so you don't lose the warmth.

Toasty toes – keep your feet from getting cold or wet by wearing socks and sensible shoes. Make sure they have a good grip for icy or slippery surfaces.

Know the route – check a map to get directions to help prevent you getting lost.

Coughs, colds and getting through the winter blues

Now that it is winter there are more challenges to our immune system: the changeable weather, going from cold outdoors to heated indoors, being surrounded by people who have coughs, colds and flu.

Here are some simple steps to prevent or overcome upper respiratory tract infections:

Dress appropriately for the environment you are in; moving from over-warm heating to outside cold is stressful for the body.

Get plenty of rest – being over tired stresses the immune system. Rest – you don't burn a cold/flu off with excessive activity, you overstress the system and prolong the illness. If feeling unwell **take a 24 hour break**, a good multi B vitamin, vitamin C 500mg 6 times a day, and drink plenty of fluids preferably water. Chicken broth is also good.

Make a drink of 1 clove of garlic, juice of 1 lemon, 1 inch of ginger, honey and 1 cup of water. Stew garlic in water for 5 minutes, allow to cool before adding the lemon juice, ginger and honey. Drink several times a day.

Be realistic- the world won't collapse without you for 24 hours, your job will still be there, the boss will cope, life will go on and you will feel better.

Remember to take care of yourself – you are worth it.



TUTANKHAMUN AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE PHARAOHS

Thanks to the generosity of D2DL, I was fortunate enough to see the Tutankhamen exhibition at the Melbourne Museum.

We met at Lifeworks, where Helen showed us her Egyptian objects from home. Her interesting book filled us in on the Egyptian time frame, and facts about that era. The road trip to the museum was enjoyable, with Emmanuel and Gabrielle at the helm. Conversation was good. We called in to McDonalds to pick up Jasmine and Tess. I treated myself to a cheese-burger, something I hadn't done for many months. It was disgustingly good! So was the coffee and cake we had after seeing the exhibition.

As we drove through Carlton and Fitzroy I felt very nostalgic, because I'd lived there in my teenage years. I have good memories of that time and the area still looked the same.

The popularity of, and interest in the exhibition was obvious in the number of people there to see it. Once inside the wooden doors, an informative piece of footage further educated us on Egyptian history, highlighting the fact that Tutankhamen was very young when he died, at age fifteen, from a cause unknown. Inside the exhibition rooms there was an amazing atmosphere, created by soft lighting and evocative music. Because of the subdued surrounding light, the objects, lit by soft, golden lights, were radiant. The pieces made of gold were exquisite in that light. The more I saw, the more I realised that the Egyptians were master craftsmen, creating functional objects which were also beautiful, and indeed, an art form.

The colours were pleasing, the attention to detail mesmerising. There was such fine, delicate carving. I also learnt that the Egyptians were gifted in their use of inlay. Amulets of gold were decorated with tiny, colourful pieces of inlay. A child's wooden chair, beautiful in design, was covered with inlay work.

An Egyptian proverb written on the wall above a doorway caught my attention. It said "When you say a dead person's name out loud, you bring them back to life". And I was particularly interested in the black and white photographs of the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb. Up until I saw the photographs, I had been wrestling with the thought that perhaps these gifts, meant for Tutankhamen to take into the after-life, should have been left where they'd been found. But it was obvious, through the photographs that these significant, precious items had been left piled up, like so much junk. Studying one photograph, I realised I was looking at the amulet I had just seen displayed in its protective glass case, restored to its original beauty. In the photograph, it was dull and dusty, tossed in a box with other tarnished pieces.

I came to the conclusion that it was right that these fascinating, beautiful artefacts be preserved for future generations to gaze upon in wonder. The exhibition was a humbling experience for me, as I realised that I was just a blink of an eye in the grand scheme of the world's vast history.

Regards, Mary

Do you have a piece of writing or some art work or photos etc. that you have been working on that you might like to share? We'd love to feature your work in a future edition!

If you are mailing your work please send it to the D2DL team at 7-9 John St. Lilydale 3140 or email to: d2dliving@each.com.au

Welcome to ...

Have Your Say



Overcoming Isolation

I am a regular reader of D2D News and would like to say how much I enjoy this newsletter. I have been most impressed with the articles and wish this newsletter had been around years ago when I need help to understand mental illness and the effects it can have on the patient and other family members.

My isolation started when a close friend separated from her husband and children and left home with no word to friend or family. I was disappointed and hurt to think we were so close and had kept each other company for many years, both socially and as support when all the children were born.

From seeing each other every day to nothing.

I spent days just existing for my family and was completely lost to the outside world.

A neighbour called one day and said her hairdresser needed someone to clean her house for two hours a week and thought of me. After a lot of talking I decided to give it a go and from there it just snowballed to eventually I was cleaning 4 houses a week.

After a while I decided to return to TAFE as an adult student and upgrade my office skills, which I did and managed to get a good office job which lasted for 19 years until I retired from the workforce. This worked really well, with a sick son and a family to look after I didn't have time to feel isolated.

It was only after I retired that the isolation returned. I knew I would have to do something to prevent it getting worse. I contacted the Yarra Valley council and got a list of clubs and chose one to start with. It took me two visits to go through the door but I made it and now have made a few new friends who I see every week at the club. I then chose another and had no trouble going through the door and meeting some really welcoming people and have been on bus trips, dinners and attend all their meetings listening to the guest speaker and learning about some interesting subjects.

I feel so proud of myself that I did this alone and it has given my self esteem a real boost.

Regards Leonie (Ashley's mum 😊)

Connecting with the Community

Don't forget to check out what is happening at the Neighbourhood houses near you. These are not-for-profit centres where people of all abilities, backgrounds and ages can come to:

- Meet, talk and make friends
- Develop new skills
- Transition to work and further study
- Volunteer
- Become involved in community events
- Find out about other services or activities in the area
- Join a class or support group
- Take up an activity for fun and enjoyment

There are over 350 neighbourhood houses across Victoria, and there is bound to be one near to where you live. They offer a large variety of classes, workshops, and courses. Some activities have fees involved such as computer courses, painting, drawing, pottery, photography, tai chi, but others are low cost or free, for example, chat and sew, walking groups, social sports such as badminton and fencing.

Consumer Feedback

Having facilitated a recent feedback session with D2DL participants on 22nd June 2011, I believe the key elements raised that day were:-

The importance of having a place where people feel socially connected.

D2DL clearly provides a place where people "feel safe" and where they are understood by other participants and workers.

D2DL provides hope and structure to the lives of people who are otherwise very isolated and marginalized.

It builds confidence and assists people to develop skills that enable them to be an active part of the community.

D2DL workers play a valuable role in ensuring participants feel valued and part of the program.

It was very evident that having the opportunity to do group activities that allowed for social connectedness was very important to people. It continues to highlight the importance of people feeling validated and part of a community so as to ensure good mental health.

Regards, Sharon Collins (Recovery Project Manager)



Check out the courses at the Community Houses near you.



Films, Books, and Other Things



Movie review: Departures

This movie won the 2009 Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film. I do not usually watch foreign movies/subtitles but really enjoyed this pleasant and captivating movie.



Departures –The Gift of Last Memories, examines the rituals surrounding death in Japan with this tale of an out-of-work celloist who accepts a job as a "Nokanashi" or "encoffineer" (the Japanese equivalent of an undertaker) in order to provide for himself and his young wife. Daigo Kobayashi (Masahiro Motoki) is a talented musician, but when his orchestra is abruptly disbanded, he is devastated and suddenly finds himself without a source of steady income. Making the decision to move back to his small hometown, Daigo answers a classified ad for a company called "Departures," mistakenly assuming that he will be working for a travel agency. Upon discovering that he will actually be preparing the bodies of the recently deceased for their trip to the afterlife, Daigo accepts the position as gatekeeper between life and death, between the departed and their grieving family.

Daigo's wife and friends universally despise his new line of work, and he becomes increasingly isolated from them. He, however, takes a great amount of pride in the fact that he is helping to ensure that the dead receive a proper send-off. He experiences a profound and sometimes comical journey as he uncovers the wonder, joy and meaning of life and living.

I recommend you give this movie a go, regards Pam.

SOLUTION TO LAST PUZZLE

3	7	2	5	9	1	4	8	6
5	4	9	3	6	8	1	7	2
8	1	6	4	7	2	5	9	3
2	5	7	1	4	9	6	3	8
9	8	4	6	3	7	2	1	5
6	3	1	2	8	5	9	4	7
7	2	8	9	5	4	3	6	1
1	9	3	8	2	6	7	5	4
4	6	5	7	1	3	8	2	9

The aim of the Sudoku puzzle is to insert numbers in the boxes to satisfy only one condition: each row, column and 3x3 box must contain one each of the digits 1 through to 9. There is a unique solution, which can be found by logical thinking.

Word Search Puzzle—Circle all the words hidden in the grid. (forwards backwards & diagonally), remaining letters spell an extra word relating to friendship.

D	C	B	C	C	A	M	D	K	C	O	F	A	S	R
N	E	O	O	A	O	N	Y	O	I	R	G	S	D	Y
E	T	Y	N	E	E	M	M	T	I	N	E	I	H	L
I	A	F	F	L	V	R	P	E	I	N	S	T	M	L
R	M	R	I	A	A	I	N	A	E	N	A	H	A	A
F	M	I	D	D	M	D	T	S	N	P	I	F	I	E
L	O	E	E	B	L	I	O	R	M	I	F	F	R	P
R	O	N	U	I	P	L	T	Y	O	E	O	A	F	T
I	R	D	N	E	C	A	S	Y	C	P	H	N	S	A
G	D	E	L	O	Y	A	L	T	Y	S	P	U	R	R
Y	S	G	O	O	D	T	I	M	E	S	R	U	I	O
S	C	H	U	M	H	O	N	E	S	T	Y	F	S	V
E	C	N	A	T	N	I	A	U	Q	C	A	U	E	A
Y	H	T	A	P	M	E	S	S	E	N	D	N	O	F

ACQUAINTANCE
AFFECTION
AFFINITY
ALLY
AMIGO
AMITY
BOYFRIEND
BUDDY

CHUM
CLOSENESS
COMPANION
COMRADE
CONFIDE
EMPATHY
FAVOR
FONDNESS

FRIENDLINESS
FUN
GIRLFRIEND
GOOD TIMES
HONESTY
KINSHIP
LEND
LOYALTY

PAL
ROOMMATE
SHARE
SUPPORTIVE
SYMPATHY
TRUST

SUDOKU

				2				9
	3		5	4	1			
8							7	
2	9	8						
3		1		9		2		7
						8	9	6
	1							5
			4	3	2		8	
7				5				



News and Information



Upcoming D2DL Events

(please let your D2DL worker know if you are coming)

Thurs 11th August: Off to the Movies



Meet at Hoyts Eastland, 11.30am for coffee, 12.30pm for movies.

Wed 14th September: Ten Pin Bowling

Meet 1pm at Oz Ten Pin, 25 Fletcher Rd, Chirnside Park (gold coin donation).

Thurs 13th October: Off to the Movies
meet at Hoyts Eastland, 11.30am for coffee, 12.30pm for movies.

Wed 16th November: Trees Adventure

High ropes and flying fox obstacle course. Come to climb or just to watch.

1.00pm at Glen Harrow Gardens, Old Monbulk Rd, Belgrave.



Wed 7th December: D2DL Christmas Party

12pm to 3 pm, at Lifeworks, 9 Greenwood Ave, Ringwood.

Check out some of the places in your area that can help with food parcels or vouchers:

- Belgrave Community Information Centre 9754 7777
- Boronia Salvation Army 9761 0864
- Croydon Citizens Advice Bureau 9725 7920
- Ferntree Gully Salvation Army 9752 3604
- Healesville Interchurch Community Care 5965 3529
- Knox Community Care 9871 8900
- Lilydale Anglicare: 49 Castella St 9735 4188
- Lilydale Community Information Centre 9735 1311
- Mooroolbark Salvation Army 9727 4777
- Ringwood Citizens Advice Bureau 9870 3233
- Woori Yallock, Valley Christian Fellowship 5961 5532

RecLink have a range of recreational activities for people who are disadvantaged. These include:

- Football/Cricket
 - Tenpin Bowling (4th Tuesday of month)-gold coin
 - Rocky Road Choir (Wednesdays)
 - Gym (Thursdays)-gold coin donation
 - Lawn Bowls (2nd and 4th Fridays of month) FREE
- Further info: www.reclink.org
or contact Marilyn on 9751-1832.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

Beyond Blue.....	1300 224 636
Direct Line—Drugs & Alcohol 24hr	1800 888 236
Front Door—Homeless Hotline 24 hr	1800 825 955
Gamblers Help Eastern	1300 131 973
Lifeline.....	13 11 14
Maroondah Hospital	9871 3333
Men’s Line Australia.....	1300 789 978
Mental Health Advice Line 24hr.....	1300 280 737
Mental Health Triage 24hr.....	1300 721 927
Mental Illness Fellowship.....	8486 4222
Nurse on Call.....	1300 60 60 24
OCD & Anxiety Helpline	1300 269 438
Suicide Helpline	1300 651 251

The Support for Day to Day Living in the Community Program (D2DL) supports people aged 17+ living in the Cities of Maroondah and Knox, and the Shire of Yarra Ranges, who have a severe and persistent mental illness and experience social isolation.

The EACH D2DL Program focuses on supporting participation in structured recreational, social, personal development, educational and pre-educational programs or activities which are appropriate to the needs of consumers.

These activities assist people to:

- Develop daily living skills
- Develop friendships and social networks
- Learn new skills and re-learn old skills
- Develop greater confidence and self reliance
- Achieve personal goals within their Personal Recovery Plan

Our links with Neighborhood Houses can provide access to a wide range of courses and activities

based on the individual’s interests and personal goals. As well as participation in Neighborhood Houses there may be other recreational or creative interests a participant may wish to pursue. D2DL also has some group activities which were initiated in response to feedback from consumers :

- Swimming—10.30am to 11.30am Mondays
- Walking— 9.30am to 1pm Tuesdays
- Newsletter—11am to 1pm Wednesdays
- Reclink Choir—1pm to 3pm Wednesdays
- Reclink Gym— 10.30am to 12.30pm Thursdays

Special thanks to our contributors for this edition of the D2DL Newsletter:

Alan, Ashley, Christine, Colleen, Fahad, Justin, Kit, Leonie, Mary, Matt, Pam, Rivendell folk, Rosemary, Sharon, Teresa.