

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEWSLETTER

## Term 4 Week 1 2023



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to Term 4! We, like you, are bewildered with how fast this year has gone but are so proud with how far our students have come in their learning and individual growth.

Starting back at school after a holiday period at home, can trigger some anxious feelings and behaviours which can make settling back in more challenging if not addressed properly. Read the following article by Karen Young, to learn some different strategies for helping your loved ones through this period.

If you think your child is showing some signs of anxiety, there are many resources out there to help you and your family. The Royal Children's Hospital has released this diagram, showing the different ways anxiety can present themselves to individual people. The Royal Children's Hospital has a section on their website dedicated to [Anxiety in Primary School Aged Children](#). Have a read to learn more about anxiety and how to support those needing help.



### **ARTICLE: ANXIETY AT SCHOOL: WHAT TEACHERS AND PARENTS CAN DO** by Karen Young

The more teachers, coaches, or any important adult can help children feel safe, seen, cared for, the more those kids will feel safe enough to ask for help, take safe risks, learn, be curious, be brave, learn, grow.

The research is so clear on this. Students who genuinely feel cared for by their teachers do better at school. This is because when children feel relationally safe, the learning brain opens wide up. Without that felt sense of relational safety, the brain will focus on getting 'safe' rather than learning.

Brains are here to keep us safe. They aren't here to keep us happy, for relationships, learning, play – unless that matters right now for our survival. The priority for all brains is safety. When we talk about 'safety', this isn't about what is actually safe or not safe. It's about what the brain perceives. It's also not just about physical safety. Relational safety (feeling cared for, welcome, seen, validated, free from humiliation, shame, judgement) is just as important to the brain.

When the brain registers any form of threat, even if 'threat' is unlikely or teeny, it will hoard all available resources in case it needs them for survival. Only when brains feel truly safe

Any ideas that behaviour at school should be managed with separation-based discipline, shame, star charts or behaviour charts or anything that publicly ranks students (someone is always on the bottom – usually the same someones), or overly-stern voices are outdated and are not at all informed by science. Fear does not motivate. It shuts down the learning brain and makes it impossible for children to learn. It does the same to adults. It's also why we need to steer away from suspensions and stand-downs. None of these fix the problem long term. They're the biggest 'you're not welcome' signs children can get and will only contribute to the problem long-term. Of course, none of this means 'no boundaries'. It means building relational safety and setting and enforcing boundaries in ways that don't tear it apart.

Unless you're one of the ones anxious kids feel safe with, you'll only see the tip of what they are capable of. School and learning were never meant to be about how outgoing kids are or how confident they are in initiating contact with an adult. Greatness is built bit by bit, and the foundations are strongest when it's safe.

What parents can do.

- Know that whatever you decide, they will follow. Do you believe they are safe and loved at school? This isn't a rhetorical question. Building relationships that feel safe and loving for children takes time. If you aren't quite there yet, they won't be either. What can help you feel more certain? Do you need a conversation? More information? Help to facilitate a relationship between your child and an anchor adult? Have a conversation with your child's school. They want to be the best they can be for your child too, and you're the one who can help that happen.

- Be the 'glue' that connects your child and their teacher. Whenever you can, let your child know you like and trust their teacher. To facilitate this, ask your child's teacher to tell you something your child did well – maybe once a month or once a fortnight. Then, pass this on to your child. 'Mrs Jones emailed me to let me know how hard you're working in maths. I really love the way she noticed that about you.' Or, incidental comments sprinkled around that sound something like, 'I really like your teacher. I think you got a goodie with Mr Smith.'

What teachers can do.

- Let them know you're their person: 'I'm going to help you do the very best you can this year. 'Being my best' will mean different things to different people. I'd love to know what this means for you and how I can help. What matters most to me is that you try hard, make brave choices, be kind, and know that you can come to me any time. The more you can help me understand what you need and what doesn't work for you, the more I can help you have a great year. I'm so pleased you're in my class.'
- At the start of the year (or any time), ask them to write the answers to the following questions:
  - What does 'doing well this year' look like for you?
  - What might make this hard?
  - How can I help?
  - What are three things teachers have done for you in the past that have helped you have a good year?
  - What are three things that teachers have done in the past that have made it harder?
  - I wish my teacher knew ...
- Build the connection. Micro-moments matter. Whenever you can (and you might not be able to do this all the time, and that's okay), connect when they walk into the room. Let this be verbal or non-verbal. As soon as kids walk into a room, they'll be looking to the adult in the room for, 'Do you see me? Are you happy I'm here? Are you ready to receive me today?' They're looking to answer the big relational safety question: 'Am I welcome here?'

Good teachers change lives. They really do. So much of a young person's experience at school isn't about what teachers teach but about who they are. When children feel seen and safe, learning will happen. The brain will surrender safety resources and allow those resources to feed into curiosity, learning, connecting, and growing in all the vibrant ways we know they can.

## **PARENT COURSE LEARNING HOW TO IDENTIFY, MANAGE AND REDUCE ANXIETY...**

As referenced in the above article, parents can be the 'glue' that connects your child with the support they need. See here, information on a parent-led child development course for parents to learn simple strategies to identify, manage and reduce anxiety in 2-14-year-olds.

Although there is an out of pocket cost; Anxiety Coach is a self-paced online child development course that aims to support you and your child through the ups and downs of life. It is what we call a 'parent-led' approach, meaning that you take on the role of the coach in your child's life, and are able to guide them through emotionally distressing episodes. Designed & developed by psychologist, author and teacher Michael Hawton, it equips you with a practical and easy set of tools, and a solid understanding of the theory behind these to enable you to build resilience in your child. <https://www.parentshop.com.au/shop/anxiety-coach-for-parents>



## **TOOL OF THE WEEK**

From the beginning of Term 2, we have had a focus on practising different stress management or coping strategies to help us through difficult times. Every week we have invested time in learning a new 'Tool of the Week' to help build our strategy bank, to best prepare ourselves with different ways to come down from feeling heightened. This has been a successful experience across the school, focusing on ways to help ourselves and acknowledge when we need tools to help us. Term 4, will include a mix of new strategies with some tools to help with transitioning into a new class at the end of the year.

Is there a tool you have adapted at home as a family? This week we will review the tools from Term 3 in preparation for learning a new one in Week 2.

### **Week 1- Revision of Term 3 tools**

# OCTOBER IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Visit [Mental Health Australia](http://MentalHealthAustralia.org.au) for more information and tips on how to support your mental health

**OCTOBER 2023**

## Look after your mental health, Australia.

[www.lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au](http://www.lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au)

**MONDAY** **TUESDAY** **WEDNESDAY** **THURSDAY** **FRIDAY** **SATURDAY** **SUNDAY**

**RAISING AWARENESS FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

- 01 Join us!** Sign up for our campaign and get ready for a special October.
- 02 Sharing is caring** Share this calendar to promote positive mental health and wellbeing.
- 03 Call a family member** Connect with a family member or loved one today. Be present and open.
- 04 Look after you** How can you be kind and loving to yourself today? What do you need?
- 05 Show gratitude** What are three things you are grateful for? Write them down.
- 06 Boundaries** Reflect on your boundaries. How can you communicate them to others?
- 07 Help-seeking** Check out [lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au](http://lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au) for support and some great resources.
- 08 Make connections** Who can you connect with today? A neighbour? Family member? Friend?

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY**

- 09 Be kind** Focus on ways you can be kind, generous and compassionate today.
- 10 World Mental Health Day** Post an image and tag – #MentalHealthMosaic! Be part of our digital Mosaic!
- 11 Be colourful** Add some colour to your wardrobe to brighten up your day!
- 12 Set some goals** Achieving goals builds confidence. Write yours down (big or small).
- 13 Support others** Check in with your loved ones. Tell them you care and appreciate them.
- 14 Try something new!** A new coffee shop, new clothes, new morning walk, new recipe – anything!
- 15 Sleep well** Try to get 7 – 9 hours of sleep each night this week.

**BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY! AND CONNECTION TO YOURSELF**

- 16 Take a walk** Get out into the fresh air for a walk. Maybe try a new path.
- 17 Be mindful** Take time today to do some breathing exercises. Look online for tips.
- 18 Self check in** How are you feeling? How can you best look after yourself today?
- 19 Belonging** As humans, we all crave belonging. Who can you reach out to today?
- 20 Freshen up Friday** What can you do to feel fresh for the weekend? Swim, pamper, bath...?
- 21 Explore nature** Try mindfully observing nature. What can you smell, hear, sense?
- 22 Dance in the morning** Start today with a dance. Play your favourite song out loud!

**HAVE FUN!**

- 23 Laugh** Laughter is key to our wellbeing. Watch or listen to something funny!
- 24 Movement** How can you move your body today and make it enjoyable?
- 25 Hobbies** Take up a new hobby today! Is there something new you want to try?
- 26 Create** Paint, draw, bake, play, create. Let your creative side shine today!
- 27 Small wins** Celebrate your wins today. What are you proud of yourself for?
- 28 Meditate** Meditation is a powerful tool for our minds. Try a new meditation.
- 29 Your toolbox** Reflect on the tips, tricks and habits that worked for you, and why?

**LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH EVERYDAY, AUSTRALIA**

- 30 Future you** How can you keep practicing these tools in your life moving forward?
- 31 You did it!** Congratulations on committing to look after your mental health, Australia!

#LookAfterYourMentalHealthAustralia #MentalHealthMosaic #WMHD2023

**Need Support?**

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 035
- Butterfly Foundation 1800 334 673
- Suicide Call Back 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline 1800 95 1500
- MensLine Australia 1300 789 876
- QLife 1800 164 527
- Carer Support 1800 242 636
- SANE Australia 1800 187 263
- Open Arms 1800 011 046

**Mental Health Australia**

Good mental health is when we can cope with the stressors of our daily lives, participate in loving relationships, contribute to our community, and work towards our goals. Everyone has mental health. And we can all benefit from looking after our own mental health and the mental health of our communities. You can find a [link to the PDF here](#) if you would like to print it out.

## RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

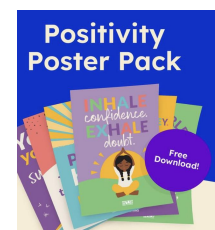
Clairvaux has worked hard to fully implement Respectful Relationships in the schools SEL curriculum this year. These lessons provide students with a plethora of themes to investigate and discuss in their safe and supportive classroom with peers and teachers. At times, parents may need some support on how to discuss certain topics with their child. Refer to Resources for Clairvaux Parents on the last page for some up to date courses provided by the City of Greater Geelong which may help you with your parenting journey.

## SEESAW SEL UPDATE

Just a friendly reminder to check your child/ren's Seesaw account for an update on what they will be learning in Social and Emotional Learning this term. The Clairvaux touchstones, Inform and Empower (cyber safety), Respectful Relationships and a Day for Daniel (learning about consent) are just some of the topics teachers and students will partake in this term.

## POSITIVITY POSTERS

You may like to [download and print off some of these posters](#) that resonate with you and may support your child.





# Resources for the Clairvaux Community

All Regional Parenting Service programs along with MELI (formerly Barwon Child Youth & Family (BCYF) and Bethany), Family Relationship Centre, Drummond St Services and Barwon Southwest Region programs will be offered face to face or online. Bookings are essential. For details of dates, times and venues please see below.

## **FEATURE FORUM BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH INDEPENDENCE**

Thursday 16 November 7.30pm – 9.00pm Surf Coast Shire Council, 1 Merrijig Drive, Torquay Scan the QR code or visit Eventbrite for tickets. Presented by Andy McNeilly Many of our children are struggling with worry and anxiety. They may face social and online challenges and can often feel stuck. As parents, we can find this difficult to help our children, as they confront issues so different to the ones we faced at a similar age. We want to help our adolescents to build their resilience, so when they encounter new challenges, they can tackle them with more confidence. This workshop is designed to help parents teach their children to be more resilient while building their independence. It will give parents simple and practical ideas to help their children, while developing strong, loving, and connected relationships.



## **BRINGING UP GREAT KIDS**

Bringing up Great Kids is a 6-week supportive program for parents of children aged 12 months to 9 years. The program aims to:

- develop parents' skills to enhance communication with their children;
- promote positive interactions between parents and their child/ren;
- encourage the development of a child's positive self identity.

## **CIRCLE OF SECURITY**

Circle of Security is an 8-week supportive program for parents of children aged birth to 5 years. The program aims to:

- help parents understand how to build feelings of security for children in their early years;
- assist parents with skills to build on the positive relationship with their child;
- develop confidence in parents to respond to their child in a way which builds a secure foundation for children.

## **TUNING IN TO KIDS**

Tuning in to kids is a 6-week supportive program for parents of children aged 4 to 10 years. The program aims to:

- help parents teach and support their child/ren to understand and manage their emotions;
- support parents in encouraging children to express emotions appropriately;
- maximise children's social, behavioural and learning outcomes.

## **BRINGING UP GREAT KIDS**

The First 1000 Days The first 1,000 days of life is a program for parents with children aged under 2 years and designed to nurture parents as they embark on their journey. It provides parents with knowledge about brain development and an understanding of how children grow and what they need. The centrality of family relationships and opportunities for parents to reflect on their own childhood and how to connect with their children are all explored.

## **BRINGING UP GREAT KIDS**

Parenting Adolescents The program builds on maintaining positive relationships and interactions between parents and adolescents during the ages of 10 to 17 years. This 6-week program will look at having a better understanding and being able to support your adolescent.

- Finding meaningful ways to stay connected with you adolescent;
- Understand that all behaviour and interaction have a meaning attached to it;
- Develop an increased understanding about the messages that they communicate to their adolescent through their behaviour, actions and attitudes;
- Develop skills to identify and manage their stress associated with parenting.

## **STEPPING STONES**

Stepping Stones is a 5-week program for families with a child who has a disability. The program aims to help parents use Positive Parenting to acquire new skills and knowledge. Skills are practised and parents receive constructive feedback about their use of skills.

## **OUR KIDS**

Parenting After Separation Our Kids is a 6-week course on parenting after separation and the impact of parental conflict on children. The course encourages parents to focus on the needs of their children and develop helpful communication strategies following separation. Courses run weekly for 6 weeks during school terms. Morning and evening sessions are available.

## **THE DAD WORKSHOP**

This 6-week program will focus on giving you the tools you need to create a better life for your entire family. We will look at simple things you can do to improve:

- your relationship with yourself;
- your relationship with your partner;
- your relationship with your kids.

## **FLOURISHING FAMILIES**

A 5-week program for parents with children of all ages to discover how you can help your family to flourish. Learn about:

- how you can promote resilience;
- increase awareness of your family's strengths;
- create and nurture positive family relationships;
- give feedback to support individual growth.

## **BUBS TO TOTS**

Bubs to Tots brings mothers (up to 24 years) of children in the 1 to 2 year age group together for support and education.

## **NO MORE SCAREDY CATS**

Reducing Anxiety and Building Resilience in Children A 4-week program for parents of children 5 to 12 years to gain an understanding of the increasing levels of anxiety in a child and strategies to help manage the "traps and tripwires" with strengthening sayings, questioning strategies and mindful exercises.

## **TUNING IN TO TEENS**

Tuning in to teens is a 6-week supportive program for parents of teens aged 12 to 18 years. The program aims to:

- support parents to connect and communicate with their teens;
- assist parents with understanding adolescent development;
- help parents to assist their teen to develop emotional intelligence;
- remain empathetic and stay connected.

## **LIVING WITH TEENS**

A model for building strong, secure connections. Living with Teens is a 3-week program. The program aims to cover:

- what parents need to be able to meet teen's needs;
- what teens need from parents;
- adolescent development.

## **BUMPS TO BUBS**

Bumps to Bubs brings young mothers and mothers-to be (up to 23 years) with babies 0 to 1 year, together to support the journey of parenting.

## **DADS TUNING INTO KIDS**

Dads Tuning into Kids is a 6-week supportive program specifically for Dads of children aged 3 to 12 years. The program aims to:

- help dads to effectively tune in to their child's emotions;
- encourage dads to strengthen their emotional connection with their child;
- support dads to build skills in emotion coaching to assist their child's individual needs.

## **POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM**

Available online via the Triple P website [www.triplep-parenting.net.au/vic-uken/triple-p/](http://www.triplep-parenting.net.au/vic-uken/triple-p/)

## **STRENGTHENING FAMILY CONNECTIONS**

Strengthening Family Connections is a free 8-week program for parents and their children aged 8 to 12 years. The program aims to build a positive family culture and strengthen family connections.

## Parent Education Events

Term 4, 2023

Program	Location / Venue	Days / Dates	Time	Bookings
Tuning in to Teens	Online via Zoom	Thursdays 12 Oct – 16 Nov	7.00pm - 9.00pm	 <b>Regional Parenting Service</b> <a href="http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/parenting">www.geelongaustralia.com.au/parenting</a> Ph: 5272 4741 
Tuning in to Kids	Online via Zoom	Wednesdays 25 Oct – 6 Dec	7.00pm - 9.00pm	
Circle of Security	Virginia Todd Community Centre 9-15 Clarence St, Geelong West	Mondays 9 Oct – 4 Dec	7.00pm - 9.00pm	
Bringing up Great Kids - Adolescents	Kurambee Myaring Community Centre, 12 Merrigg Drive Torquay VIC 3228	Tuesdays 14 Nov – 19 Dec	7.00pm - 9.00pm	
Bringing Up Great Kids	Virginia Todd Community Centre 9-15 Clarence St, Geelong West	Thursdays 19 Oct – 23 Nov	7.00pm - 9.00pm	
<b>To express your interest for the following programs please scan the QR code</b>				
The Dad Workshop	Stepping Stones	Flourishing Families		 <b>Family Relationship Centre</b> <a href="http://www.catholiccarevic.org.au">www.catholiccarevic.org.au</a> Ph: 5246 5600
BUGK First 1000 Days	No More Scaredy Cats			
Our Kids – Parenting after Separation	Family Relationship Centre 7 Ryan Place, Geelong	Tuesdays 10 Oct – 21 Nov Thursdays 12 Oct – 16 Nov	6.00pm – 8.00pm	
Online parenting programs	Drummond St Services offer a range of online programs, please see their website for further details.	Various dates and times		 <b>Drummond Street Services</b> <a href="http://ds.org.au/events/">ds.org.au/events/</a>



## Parent Education Events

Term 4, 2023

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Tuning in to Kids	Meli 222 Malop Street, Geelong, VIC 3220	Thursdays 19 Oct – 23 Nov	10.30am - 12.30pm	 <b>Meli</b> Meli, the new name for BCYF and Bethany <a href="http://www.bcyf.org.au">www.bcyf.org.au</a> Ph: 5226 8900 
Circle of Security	Meli 222 Malop Street, Geelong, VIC 3220	Tuesday 17 Oct – 21 Nov	9.30am - 11.30am	
Strengthening Family Connections	Torquay College 45-55 Grossman's Rd Torquay VIC 3228	Wednesday 11 Oct – 29 Nov	2.00pm - 5.00pm	
Bringing Up Great Kids – Parenting Adolescents	Bannockburn Cultural Centre – Barwon Room, 27 High St, Bannockburn VIC 3331	Tuesday 17 Oct – 21 Nov	5.30pm – 7.30pm	
Tuning in to Teens	Kurambee Myaring Community Centre, 12 Merrigg Drive, Torquay VIC 3228	Thursdays 19 Oct – 23 Nov	12.30pm - 2.30pm	
<b>To express your interest for the following programs please contact MELI</b>				
Baby College	Bumps to Bubs	Bubs to Tots		 <b>CatholicCare Victoria – Warrnambool</b> <a href="http://www.catholiccarevic.org.au">www.catholiccarevic.org.au</a> Ph: 4344 4588 E: <a href="mailto:helen.diamond@catholiccarevic.org.au">helen.diamond@catholiccarevic.org.au</a>
Circle of Security	Children's Services Centre 550-600 Raglan Pde, Warrnambool	Wednesdays 26 July – 30 Aug	6.30pm – 8.00pm	
Circle of Security	Moyne Shire - Location TBC	Thursdays 12 Oct – 16 Nov	5.00pm – 7.00pm	
Tuning in to Teens	City of Warrnambool & Headspace	Thursdays 23 Nov – 7 Dec	Time TBA	
Living with Teens	Online via Zoom	Thursdays 23 Nov – 7 Dec	Time TBA	

