

BUDDIES News - March 2016



Welcome! It's great to be enjoying the awesome weather (and long may it last), however we are moving into another seasonal transition. Many people move through different phases in their wellbeing, just like the weather—ever changing, evolving and transitioning. Less daylight hours and colder weather can also have an impact on wellbeing for some - it can feel like gentle tides or rough seas and sometimes the following days forecast doesn't always turn out to be so accurate! What do you need to do to support yourself through these changes and enhance your wellbeing? If you put self-care first, you are then in the best place to be of service to others and continue with the great work you do in our sector. Keep reading to find out some proven ways to enhance your wellbeing...

E-News or Hard Copy?

Would you like to help us reduce our publishing costs and be more environmentally friendly? If you currently receive a hard copy of this newsletter and would prefer to receive it via email, please let us know at andi@kites.org.nz so we can add you to our electronic mailing list. We would really appreciate it. 😊

Buddies Annual Summer Event

This year the Buddies had a BBQ and swim at the Khandallah outdoor Pool. We had a great turnout considering a number of the Buddies had work commitments. We missed them but it was awesome to connect with those who were able to come and enjoy some informal team building. What better way to do it with some rest and relaxation—and a whole lot of fun! Even just a couple of hours out of your week to mix with some likeminded people and have some down time can help to recharge your batteries. The pool is great and surrounded by bush so head down there while the weather is still good and catch up with some friends for a BBQ or picnic in the park after a swim.

A big thanks to these two lovely ladies too, who were in charge of “not burning” the food!

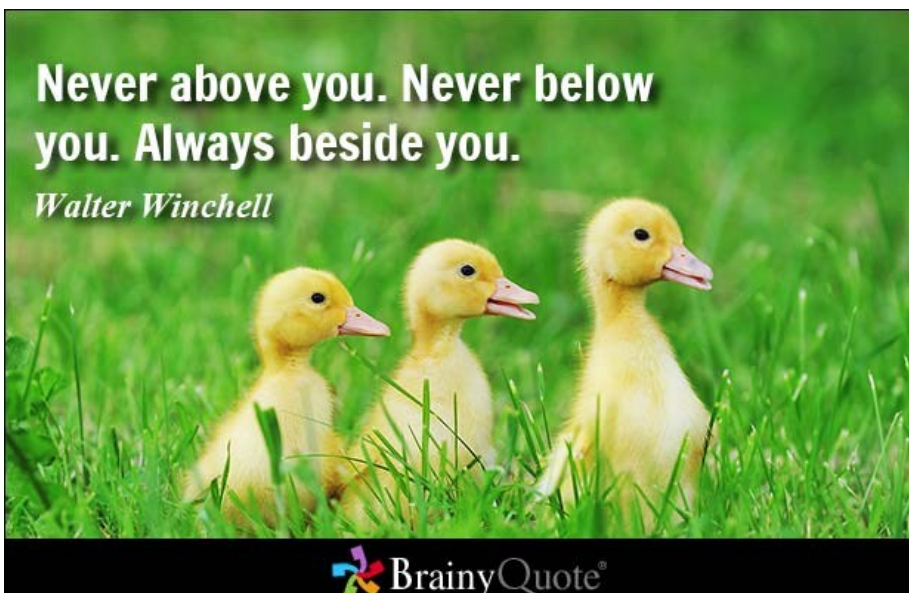


BUDDIES

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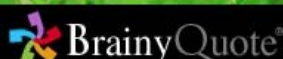
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**Never above you. Never below
you. Always beside you.**

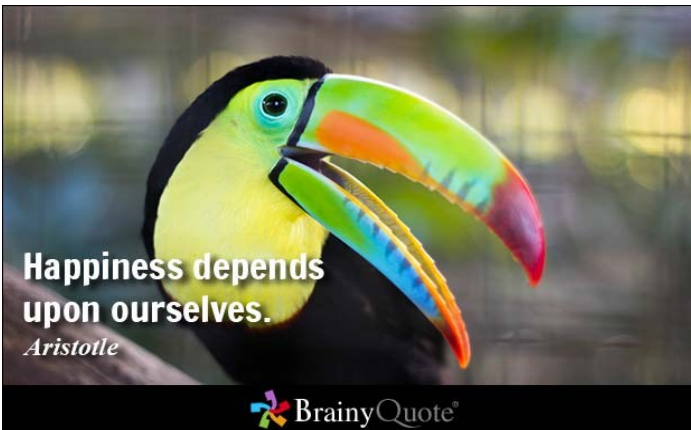
Walter Winchell



Ways to Wellbeing

De-stress and Hardwire Some Happiness!

In this newsletter we are featuring mindfulness and gratitude as some ways to wellbeing. We have also included a bit about the neuroscience around happiness and the evidence supporting how you can rewire your brain for positive emotions. Did you know that introducing some simple practices into your daily routine (even just five minutes a day) can increase your happiness levels?



Mindfulness

Once, mindfulness practices may have been considered hippyish or new-agey but now evidence is emerging that they can help manage stress as well as reduce anxiety and depression.

There is lots of information available online and you could start with The Mental Health Foundations Mindful Aotearoa (mindfulaotearoa.nz), who also have some other useful links including Mindful Net (mindfulnet.org).

Action: Sit quietly with your eyes closed and focus on your breath, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Each breath cycle should be about 6-8 seconds. Notice the sensations with each breath as you inhale and exhale.

Tip: Keep it short and simple. Set a reminder on your phone to take a minute out of a busy day to have a go!

Adopt An Attitude of Gratitude

Who would have thought that there are some scientifically proven benefits of being grateful! Did you know being grateful for things in your life, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, can help increase your sense of satisfaction, happiness and health? A research study also showed that cultivating appreciation as well as other positive emotions showed an immediate reduction in cortisol.

Some proven benefits:

- Increased self-esteem
- Better sleep
- Enhanced empathy and reduced aggression
- Increases emotional and physical health

Sounds like it is a bit of an overall stress buster—that has to be good! Like everything, if we want to change we have to commit to taking action.

Action: Everyday over the next week when you wake up or go to bed think about 5 things you are grateful for. It can be anything about yourself, your day, work etc. Make it part of your daily routine and you will start to feel an overall increased appreciation for life.

Tip: Don't stop at 5 if you can think of more or if you are finding it hard to think of specific things, start with gratitude for being the unique person you are.

Neuroplasticity— Hardwire Your Way To Happiness!

Neuroplasticity is about the brains ability to change and create new neural pathways. Some of the known benefits have been improved memory, concentration and HAPPINESS! Do you want to be happier, more resilient and achieve increased wellbeing? Rick Hanson has an abundance of tools, tips and techniques based on neuroplasticity (he recently featured on the Mental Health Foundation Website). "Good Things Add Up Over Time" (www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpuDyGgleh0) is a TED talk by Dr Hanson, on Hardwiring Happiness - overcoming the brains negativity bias. Check it out as well as his website (www.rickhanson.net).

Working Towards Wellbeing

Stepping Stones To Paid Employment

Buddies can be a Pathway to Employment

There are many reasons peers want to volunteer as a Buddy, including the personal reward of seeing others lives improve through their support. For many volunteers in general, giving their time is a step towards getting into the paid workforce.

Buddies have the opportunity to develop both personal and professional skills. They gain valuable experience as a Peer Support Worker and have the opportunity of professional development and industry recognised training such as IPS (Intentional Peer Support). For some, being a Buddy has led to paid work in the mental health & addictions sector.

There are many benefits of being a volunteer. For some, it means they can establish a regular routine in their week while developing good work habits. This all contributes to building confidence and wellbeing in readiness of going out in the bigger wider world of work life.

A recent Harvard study found that those who give their time find they have more if it and as well as gaining new skills and experience, there can also be some health benefits. Also, volunteering to do something you love can make you feel more loved and build empathy, strengthen social bonds and make you smile (forbes.com, 5 surprising benefits of volunteering). These are all things Buddies have experienced over the years in some form or other.

From some current Buddies:

“Volunteering for Buddies has helped me to develop healthy routines and connect better with other peers. Within my new job, these skills have been helpful to have developed previously through volunteering”

“Volunteering helps me learn more skills and uses my energy for something positive. I get enjoyment from the connection with others”



Supported Employment

Returning to work after a long period of not working, or entering the workforce for the first time, can be daunting for anyone. With the additional experience of mental distress it can feel overwhelming and sometimes seemingly impossible.

Did you know you don't have to do it on your own? There are a number of local organisations who can assist you in finding work and provide ongoing support to help you stay in your job.

ACEmployment is one of those providers (<http://www.wgtnaftercare.org.nz/acemployment>) - they will support you with the transition into work as well as providing support to your employer if required. The team at ACE can also assist with CV writing, help with job search, interviewing techniques and assisting a person to maintain employment.

The long-term objective is to support you to have complete independence in a work setting and thrive.

Work-Life Balance

It is important to consider what this means to you as it is very much an individual thing.

Maintaining wellbeing can guide your career choice and how many days/hours you work.

Work-life balance can change and evolve with your lifestyle so keep checking in with yourself that you have the balance that's right for you.

Peer Support And Recovery

Benefits of Buddies Peer Support on the Ward

Over the time Buddies has been providing Peer Support at Te Whare o Maitairangi (TWOM), we have seen the value of mentoring peers around their recovery. People in TWOM enjoy being able to talk to a non-clinical person. A key benefit for them has clearly been the ability to have a conversation with someone who has been there themselves.

"It was a great encouragement to see the Buddies visiting the ward, and interacting with us. Their comfortable manner was so great because it didn't make me feel 'different' for being a patient, or judged at all. I liked how they did not pressure me (or anybody else) to chat to them, they were just there, with a calm and positive presence to them. When I did feel like talking, it was so mutual, a real conversation, nothing forced about it. "

Meet our New Youth Peer Support Coordinator...

Hi, whanau. My name is Hamish, and I am the newest addition to the team at Kites.

I have been a youth worker for the last five years, teaching creative and leadership skills, and hanging out with some awesome young people. During that time, around half of the young people I was journeying with at the time were experiencing at least one form of mental distress. It was during this time that my passion grew for supporting those who were experiencing mental distress.

I am now undertaking a very exciting new project at Kites, creating a program which will provide peer support for young people aged 18-24 years who have had lived experiences of mental distress. This will be the first program of its kind in Wellington, so I am very blessed to be involved in such an awesome initiative. For more information, feel free to contact me on 020 4114 4958.

News From Amigos

Amigos continue to run a number of community based groups and activities and now have an awesome website up and running— well done guys! Check it out here—<http://amigosnz.wix.com/amigospeersupportwnz>. They also have a vacancy for a Volunteer Coordinator and the role could be shared. You can enquire about the role via their website.

WRITE A ONE PAGE RECOVERY STORY FOR PAYMENT AND A FREE BOOK

Swell is looking for your peer recovery stories

Swell is the online recovery toolkit for people with mental distress and the people who support them. They are now developing content for mental health workers. Swell will have 60 life challenges in 10 domains. Each challenge includes a two-page article on what works, a conversation guide and a peer recovery story. Visit www.swelltoolkit.com to see an example of the content and find out more about Swell.

Each peer recovery story needs to be half a page to a full page (A4 or US letter) and submitted by Monday 21 March 2016 to info@swelltoolkit.com. Each story will discuss your experience of struggling with and overcoming ONE of 12 challenges.

HOUSING: Finding a suitable place to live; Managing the household; Dealing with landlords and neighbours; Physical and emotional safety at home.

WORK: Finding work; Disclosing lived experience; Negotiating work conditions; Succeeding in the workplace.

INCOME: Sticking to a budget; Getting out of debt; Saving for the future; Making money go further.

All people who submit a story (as specified above) will get a free login to the Swell resources. People who submit a story that is published will receive a NZD \$100 Amazon gift voucher and a free copy of 'Madness Made Me' by Mary O'Hagan. The stories will be edited in collaboration with the authors who will decide if they want their story to be an anonymous or not. Email your inquiries to info@swelltoolkit.com.