

DIRECTIONS ACT



DIRECT NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 1

Summer 2010

Special points of interest:

- Residential detox changes
- Support for mums and dads
- Summertime, party time
- Alternative therapy/ Post-detox assistance
- A helping hand for young people
- Addressing addiction the SMART way
- New Pharmacotherapy Nurse

Inside this issue:

- * Arcadia House service improvement
- * Parents matter
- * Staying Party Safe this summer/Staff profile
- * Sandplay for adults and children/Aftercare program
- * Youth Support Services/ Staff profile
- * SMART Recovery - a growing success
- * Althea Wellness Centre welcomes Pharmacotherapy Nurse

ARCADIA HOUSE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

By Mackenzie Clare

In August I took on the role of Service Improvement Leader of Arcadia House. So what does this mean to the program? How does it impact on the clients? And more importantly what is being considered for the future of Arcadia and how will this affect the AOD sector in the ACT?

Arcadia is a selective, non-medicated withdrawal centre for people experiencing substance use issues, which means that we don't admit people who have been drinking or taking drugs excessively. This is due to the medical risks of detoxification, such as seizures, that require monitoring from professional medical staff.

Arcadia House offers a safe, tranquil and natural seven day withdrawal alternative. The purpose of Arcadia is to facilitate a withdrawal that provides both physical and psychological resources to support clients in attaining the best possible outcome. We make available to the client numerous complementary therapies to assist in the withdrawal process including: massage, naturopathy, herbal medicines and self-help groups.

At Arcadia House we are able to accept clients needing to stabilise on their pharmacotherapy. Clients can dose at Calvary hospital daily once their prescription is transferred from their dosing pharmacy to Calvary.

All potential clients undergo a phone assessment to evaluate their eligibility. Once admitted clients are case managed which helps them work through their individual issues and assists them with gaining access to other services. Any ineligible clients are referred on to other treatment services.

Our program includes both relapse prevention groups and therapeutic groups so that the client can begin to reflect on their life circumstances and positive strategies can be put in place to prevent relapse or slips in their recovery.

Workers from DIRECTIONS ACT's Aftercare program come in and have a chat with clients to develop plans to continue treatment when they leave Arcadia. The program offers counselling, medical support, SMART Recovery and other support networks to assist clients in maintaining their recovery.

Health promotion and education groups for clients are presented with diverse topics such as: Hepatitis C, hygiene, nutrition and first aid. Also there is craft, gardening and even legal aid come in and inform the clients of their rights within the law.

I usually hate figures but last months stats support my view that consistency in treatment works. Of 29 admissions, 13 residents went on to residential rehab, which says a lot for the program and the workers facilitating it.

Arcadia House is undertaking a consultation process to consider changing to a short-term residential transition facility, running a twelve to sixteen week program that will utilise Therapeutic Community (TC) principles. This is in its early stages and a lot of work is to be done if we are to be successful in implementing this future development of Arcadia House.

Staff have recently visited other treatment facilities in Sydney and Wollongong to see first hand how short term residential treatment services operate. Some of the principles of these services have been put in place and are now assisting in positive outcomes for our clients.

I have noticed in my short time at Arcadia the need for clients to have access to a short term program. Many clients over the last three or four months have spoken about wanting to attend a short program and not wanting to attend a long term program. Implementing this program will benefit the AOD sector in the ACT by filling a gap in our sector and it will give agencies another option for our ever increasing client group.

I thank the Arcadia staff for their commitment to the care of our clients. As 2010 begins I can foresee a bright future for DIRECTIONS ACT and Arcadia House and look forward to implementing more changes that will help clients continue their recovery.

Parents Matter

DIRECTIONS ACT is committed to supporting parents with substance use problems. For these parents guilt and shame can often be a barrier to accessing health and other services. DIRECTIONS ACT, through the Parent Support and Maysoon Groups, aims to support parents to value themselves, set achievable goals, and care for their children and themselves in ways that build self esteem and confidence. In 2010 DIRECTIONS ACT will stagger our parent groups so mums, dads and kids are catered for year round during term time. This year the Parent Support Group will run in Terms 1 and 3 for men and Maysoon will run in Terms 2 and 4 for women. Please note that DIRECTIONS ACT provides **FREE** onsite childcare for both of these groups.

Parent Support Group

DIRECTIONS ACT and Parentline are working together to support dads who have issues with Alcohol and Other Drugs to increase their confidence and skills as parents. DIRECTIONS ACT and Parentline jointly ran the Parent Support Group in 2009 with the aid of government funding. The Parent Support Group was so successful that we are running it again in 2010 despite our government funding ceasing at the end of 2009. DIRECTIONS ACT values the contribution of parents to the broader community and have undertaken financial responsibility to keep this important program running.

Someone once said that it takes a village to raise a child, but these days parents can feel very isolated and people who have substance use issues can often feel cut off from the support they need and be reluctant to seek help when problems get too much with their children. All parents can feel it is difficult to cope with the demands of parenting and we all sometimes need a little assistance.

We understand the demands of parenting are hard to cope with and offer a course that provides information and strategies in a friendly, safe place that supports men to provide the love and nurturing their children need.

Where: DIRECTIONS ACT
1 Bradley Street, Woden
When: 4th Feb–25th March, 2010
(Thursdays)
Time: 10:00am – 12.00pm
Cost: No cost

Free onsite childcare provided

Maysoon-women walking proudly

Maysoon is a popular program for mothers with substance use issues, offering a safe and confidential way for women to access legal, health and housing services as well as enjoy support from other women, a non-judgmental AOD facilitator and a peer worker. A typical session will include time to discuss what has been happening during the week and an experiential exercise in self confidence, goal setting, decision making, self esteem or similar. There are pamper sessions and interesting guest speakers. We also provides a continuum of services including the Althea Wellness Centre which has a doctor and nurses and access to ACT dental services.

The group is informal, friendly, fun and supportive. One popular activity is the Vision Board, which is a really enjoyable way for our clients to start discovering what they really want in their life, what makes them happy and beginning to set goals to achieve this. Creating a Vision Board can have surprising results and provide ongoing inspiration, making a contribution to satisfaction with life. The goals for women in Maysoon have included; access or live with own children, improve health, live in a nice place, have a job, study, live near water, be in happy relationships, lose weight have a nice garden..... the list is endless.

An example of how it works; one client, "Annie" (not her real name), decided that she wanted happiness and the facilitator asked what that looked like for her. After thinking about it for a few minutes she said it was seeing smiles on her own and her children's faces. She was then asked what she and they would be doing or what would be

happening for them to have smiles on their faces. Annie replied that it would be simple daily things like preparing meals together, sharing activities and having a picnic in a park near water. The next step was for her to look through the collection of magazines provided and cut out images and words that represented her individual needs and goals, and paste them onto her A3 piece of paper. Annie's collage had pictures of happy children, picnics, photos of her own kids, the word DETERMINATION, and other images that represented how she wanted her life to look. It was individual, realistic, achievable, inspiring and above all empowering; it became a visual motivator to help keep Annie focussed on her goals. A Vision Board can be a powerful reminder of what we aspire to work towards in our daily lives and what brings us the most joy in life. We can place them somewhere like behind our bedroom door or as this person did, on the lounge room wall, to remind us of what is important to us and where we wish to be or what we want in our life.

Where: DIRECTIONS ACT
1 Bradley Street, Woden
When: 6th May – 24th June, 2010
(Thursdays)
Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm
Cost: No Cost

Free onsite childcare provided

To book a place in either group, please call **Ineke** 6122 8000.

Beyond our parenting groups, DIRECTIONS ACT offers free child and family counselling for families living with the effects of someone's substance misuse.

Parentline offers free, confidential counselling and support services to parents over the telephone, ongoing after hours support, free face to face counselling plus ideas and resources about parenting.

Parentline 6287 3833
9:00am – 9:00pm weekdays
www.parentlineact.org.au

Staying Party Safe This Summer

Safe Drinking

Although Christmas is over, the “silly season” is not. There are many months of daylight savings, holidays and socialising ahead so here are a few tips to make sure you can celebrate safely.

- Have enough rest, food in your stomach and water before you start.
- Plan how you will get home; arrange a designated driver or someone to pick you up and carry the money for a taxi just in case.
- Know the limits for yourself, and try to stick to them. Pace yourself - remember it's only one standard drink an hour for women and two standard drinks in the first hour then one standard drink each hour after that for males*.
- Start with a non-alcoholic drink and space your drinks with water in between each alcoholic drink and a big glass of water before bed.
- Some people also benefit from drinking a sweetened drink like cordial to replace blood sugar.
- Try alternatives, such as low alcohol or non-alcoholic wines, ginger beer.
- Remember that ‘alcopops’ (sweet flavoured pre-mixed drinks) often mask the taste of alcohol, but they do not mask the effects.
- Avoid mixing drinks and doing shots.
- Have one drink at a time so you can keep track of your drinks – avoid ‘topping up’.
- Avoid rounds or ‘shouts’, this can pressure you into drinking more than you want.
- Avoid eating salty snacks that make you thirsty.
- Avoid just sitting and drinking, go to venues where something is happening such as pool, music etc.
- It is recommended to regularly sip water when drinking alcohol or partying. If dancing, then drink around 500ml an hour and if inactive then 250ml an hour.

Remember: Mixing alcoholic drinks with other drugs can be dangerous.

*National guidelines recommend that women have no more than one standard drink a day and men have no more than two. Both men and women should also have at least two alcohol-free days a week.

One of the serious risks of binge drinking is alcohol poisoning; this can lead to a person losing consciousness and they may slip into a coma. If person needs medical assistance, place them on their side in the recovery position and call an ambulance, mobile 112 or landline 000.

DIRECTIONS ACT Staff Profile

Name: Paul or PSP (Party Safe Paul).

Program: Party Safe

Position: Party Safe Coordinator

What is your role at DIRECTIONS ACT? I coordinate the Party Safe Program, I am also the maintenance man, Fire Warden, and the eye candy for the ladies.

How long have you been with the organisation?
22 months.

Why did you choose this type of work? The desire to work with and help people.

What do you like best about your job? I like the variety. The people I work with and the people that I come across through work keep things interesting.

What would you do if you didn't work here? I would still be working in IT, probably in a management capacity.



Sandplay Therapy for Children and Adults

The DIRECTIONS ACT Family Counselling program has an alternative counselling approach to complement our traditional counselling work. Expressive therapy, using sandplay and symbol work for children, adolescents and adults is a holistic counselling tool that provides a non-confrontational way for people to process and integrate life's stresses, trauma and emotional distress.

Sandplay therapy sees the client using a sand tray and miniature symbols to create pictures or scenes that express their feelings and experiences in a meaningful, non-threatening way. DIRECTIONS ACT has a skilled Family Counsellor who is also a qualified Sandplay Therapist and is available to work with clients of all ages to use this effective expressive therapy. With guidance from the therapist, Sandplay helps the client to process and understand their feelings

though non-verbal expression.

Expressive therapies can help clients of all ages to access a wider range of intrapersonal skills by increasing their



self-esteem, resilience, strengths, and coping skills. It also helps them address the impact of drug or alcohol misuse. It allows the client to use their 'inner healer' which determines the speed and direction of the process, thus making it a safe way to work with

traumatised and troubled clients.

Many clients seeking assistance from DIRECTIONS ACT have faced great adversity during their lives. Living with someone who abuses drugs or alcohol can mean that family members are subjected to neglect, abuse, violence and exposure to the drug scene. For many of our clients, especially children, it's a struggle to verbalise their trauma and emotional distress. Expressive therapies utilise creative methods and means to integrate or process these traumas and emotions as an alternative to verbal expression. However, Sandplay is not limited to young people and it is a very effective way for people of any age to express themselves and work through their issues in a safe way.

For more information call Bek on **6122 8000**.

Aftercare Program

The Aftercare Program is a service provided by DIRECTIONS ACT which aims to provide Arcadia House clients with support and referral after leaving detox. For many people the detox process is just the first step in trying to transform their drug and alcohol use into a longer term non-use period.

We support people who are unsure of the next step after detox, specifically those people who don't have immediate plans to go to a rehabilitation facility. Aftercare works to link people with the appropriate service after they leave Arcadia House, whether this is within DIRECTIONS ACT or another agency. It links the individual with the most appropriate service available, which can include referral to counselors, our Treatment Support Service, help with housing or linking into support groups such as AA, NA or SMART Recovery.

An Aftercare worker holds an initial assessment with clients nominated for Aftercare whilst they are in the Arcadia program. After discharge the Aftercare process is a two week program, with the client being contacted within a few days post-discharge for a follow up phone call. From this point the client

may wish to see the Aftercare worker again to talk further about options or some clients may wish to be directed into other programs or services.

Due to the nature of relapse not all clients are contactable post-Arcadia, however the Aftercare workers always attempt contact and if this is not achieved within two weeks a letter is sent to the client reminding them of services and support DIRECTIONS ACT can offer.

A mini case study shows how Aftercare works. John (not his real name) was a 40 year old male residing at Arcadia House to detox from alcohol. After a few days he met with the Aftercare worker to identify what support structures might be most helpful for him post-Arcadia. John had decided that he would like to attend AA



meetings on a twice weekly basis and would also like to be a part of the SMART Recovery support group but felt unsure if he wanted to attend counselling. Post-Arcadia John was contacted by an Aftercare worker who followed up and attended DIRECTIONS ACT for a session with the Aftercare worker where they discussed how the transition back into home life had been going and how John was going with attending AA and SMART Recovery meetings. John disclosed that he was struggling and thinking about relapse and had decided to attend counselling sessions for a more intense approach to relapse prevention. He also asked for assistance with housing, seeking a housing transfer to a ground level flat because his home had a staircase, which caused John numerous falls because he was very unsteady on his feet. The Aftercare worker referred John to a counsellor within DIRECTIONS ACT and arranged a support letter to Housing in support of John's request for a transfer. John's journey is not over but he knows there is support at DIRECTIONS ACT and he has benefitted from using what's on offer.

DIRECTIONS ACT **6122 8000**.

Youth Support Service

Every weekend, Australia wide, thousands of young people attend house parties, night clubs, gigs, raves/doofs and a number of other entertainment venues. Most young people do not take drugs but for those who do, this may mean becoming involved in a range of risky behaviours which include:

- **Poly drug use:** mixing more than one substance with another can be very dangerous for a number of reasons including overdose.
- **Unsafe sex:** Can lead to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy, sexual assault and loss of dignity.
- **Driving while under the influence of drugs:** Many people on Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) feel overly confident and invincible and think they can achieve anything, however their reaction time is impaired.
- **Become violent or be a victim of violence:** ATS use can lead to aggression and you can easily be taken advantage of when intoxicated.
- **Doing something you may regret:** This can relate to problems such as robbery, violence or assault, trouble with the law, and unwanted sexual activity or regrettable sex.
- **Other safety and health issues:** Injury while intoxicated, or suffering long term health damage.

Taking risks while intoxicated can be stimulating and fun. However, it is important to keep in mind that you could be easily putting yourself and others at risk.

DIRECTIONS ACT Youth Support Service has a dedicated Youth Support Worker to provide friendly, non-judgmental advice, information and support. The Youth Support Worker can assist with any alcohol or other drug related issues either for yourself, your friends or family. He can also help you deal with housing, finances, relationships, work, legal hassles, mental health problems and much more.

The Youth Support Service helps young people to gain information and find options that are right for them. To find out more about the Youth Support Service please call Shane on **6122 8000** or go to our website at www.directionsact.com

DIRECTIONS ACT Staff Profile

Name: Shane

Program: Counselling Team

Position: Youth Support Worker/Counsellor

What is your role at DIRECTIONS ACT? I am part of the Counselling team and I specialise in working with youth hence my youth support role. I am also on the OH&S committee, and am known to be the workplace JESTER!!

How long have you been with the organisation? 5 and a bit years. I have been working myself to the bone for DIRECTIONS ACT since August 2004. Throughout this time I have worked in the Needle Syringe Program at East Row, worked with the Life Skills and Education Teams, managed projects, coordinated the Outreach team, and am now part of the Counselling Team.

Why did you choose this type of work? Over the years we have all had friends or family who got involved with illicit substances and came out worse for wear. I saw a family member and a few mates go through this and thought about doing some study around alcohol and other drug use. I then started working as a casual at both Ted Noffs and DIRECTIONS ACT, before moving to permanent work at DIRECTIONS ACT.

What do you like best about your job? DIRECTIONS ACT is a great place to work. The staff are unreal to work side by side with and always make work fun. The diverse range of people that I work with also makes my work a pleasure as no one person has the exact same issues, and everyone may need to approach these problems in a different way.

Where would I be working if I didn't work here? No doubt I would have found another AOD agency to work with and they would be the lucky ones to have me.



SMART Recovery - a growing success

SMART (**S**elf **M**anagement **A**nd **R**ecovery **T**raining) Recovery commenced at DIRECTIONS ACT in September 2008 and has proven to be a successful and growing program, with support groups facilitated by DIRECTIONS ACT 3 times a week. The program is based on the principles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) which helps people to understand, manage and work on changing their unhelpful thoughts and actions. The meetings encourage self empowerment, self reliance and work on the premise that addictions are complex maladaptive behaviours. SMART Recovery does not use the disease model; instead teaching practical tools and techniques for self directed change. The meetings include open and interactive discussions amongst the group members and encourage individuals to recover and live healthy and satisfying lives.

Initially we started with our Tuesday morning (10:30am-12:00pm) group, and then progressed to a Thursday afternoon (3pm-4:30pm) group as well. As the numbers grew, and more people asked about SMART Recovery, we found a need for an evening group (Tuesdays 5:00pm-7:00pm) to allow workers and other people who have daytime commitments to attend.

The SMART recovery program is comprised of 4 cornerstones:

1. Building and maintaining motivation
2. Coping with urges
3. Problem solving
4. Lifestyle balance

While there are many factors which assist our clients in changing their behaviour(s) several aspects of SMART Recovery really stand out. What most clients like about the group is the absence of "war stories" ; the majority do not wish to be reminded of the difficulties of living with addiction as they all have their own particular experiences and prefer to focus on the present and gain knowledge on how to change their behaviour for the future.

The second factor that most clients readily take to is the knowledge that their own particular addiction (and here it is worth noting that we have clients addicted to food, shopping and sex as well as alcohol and drugs) is mainly a learnt behaviour and as such is treatable (or "un-learnable", if you will) by the client with assistance from SMART Recovery techniques.

SMART Recovery techniques mainly revolve around one simple saying – the way you think influences the way you feel which influences the way you act. Once the client is able to understand this they are then able to change their particular circumstances to avoid triggers. During discussions with our clients as to 'what works' a significant number are unable initially to stop and think before acting. Our facilitators believe one of the strengths in SMART Recovery is giving the client the power to re-acquire this ability.

We currently have several successes attending our groups one of whom has, after more than a decade of fighting a particular addiction, managed with a combination of one on one counselling and SMART Recovery to abstain from her particular addiction for over 100 days now and is clearly enjoying her sobriety. She is also seen as a positive example by other members of the group and is now discussing ways she can help other members to achieve what she has. It should also be noted that SMART Recovery principles are, where appropriate, being used by some of the counselling team in a one on one setting as some of our clients react really well to the structure and positive themes that SMART Recovery encourages our clients to do.

What to expect in a SMART recovery Meeting

Each group has anywhere from 4-12 participants and runs for 90 minutes. Participants do a personal check-in to say how their last week has been and any crises, challenges or achievements they have experienced. People new to the group may like to give a brief overview of what has been happening in their lives to bring them to a SMART recovery group although this is not compulsory; it depends on how comfortable the person feels with sharing this information. An agenda is set from what the participants have said at their check-in and the bulk of the session is spent discussing the participants' needs and coming up with plans on how to manage their difficulties. This is when the skills are taught and/or used and participants' interaction with each other is part of the learning.

Participants of the groups facilitated at DIRECTIONS ACT have found the skills learnt during the meetings to be very useful and some have managed to reduce or abstain from their addictive behaviour(s) as a result of putting their new skills into practice. Some of the regular participants are a great support to the new members and offer valuable first hand experience of what has worked for them.

For 2010 SMART Recovery dates, please call DIRECTIONS ACT on **6122 8000** or visit our website and view the calendar at www.directionsact.com

DIRECTIONS ACT

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Our Mission

To promote and maximise the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities affected by Alcohol and Other Drug related harms.

To improve health, social and economic outcomes by reducing the harmful effects of illicit drug use in the ACT and region.

Aims

To implement intervention, assistance and support services to drug dependant persons, their significant others, extended families and the broader community through the optimisation of all available resources within the organisation and the community.

To utilise evidence based community education methodologies to minimise the adverse community impact of drug misuse.

Our Programs

- Counselling Services
- Needle and Syringe Program
- Community Education
- Arcadia House Detox and Withdrawal Services
- Treatment Support Service
- Support Groups
- Primary Health Care
- Resources
- Outreach and Promotional Activities



DIRECTIONS ACT

Drug
Information
Referral
Education
Counselling
Treatment
Intervention
Options
NSP
Service

Althea Wellness Centre welcomes Pharmacotherapy Nurse

The Althea Wellness Centre project was recently able to secure funding to employ a Pharmacotherapy Nurse for the clinic at DIRECTIONS ACT. The Althea Team would like to welcome Harry Luciap to this position.

The Pharmacotherapy Nurse position has been designed to support our clients, clinical and non-clinical staff in a number of ways. These include actively engaging with and providing support, information, referrals and case management to clients of Althea Wellness Centre and Arcadia House who are on a pharmacotherapy.

The Pharmacotherapy Nurse will liaise with community pharmacists about clients dosing in the community, liaise between pharmacists

and clients where required and liaise with community stakeholders, medical officers as well as interstate agencies.

Harry will bring a wealth of knowledge about the effects of medications as well as their contraindications to this role. He understands our client base and the high prevalence of blood borne viruses amongst the injecting community. Harry will advise our clients on safe injecting practices and provide crisis intervention where required.

As our Pharmacotherapy Nurse, Harry will be responsible for following up all clients on opioid maintenance therapy and follow up clients between scheduled appointments

where deemed necessary or beneficial to the client. He will monitor clients' progress to ensure that they are supported in fulfilling their case management plan, which will be developed by the Treatment Support Service Manager, the GP or their Counsellor.

Harry will work at the Althea Wellness Centre three days a week (Mon to Wed) starting Monday 4th January 2010.

We are looking forward to expanding the clinical services to our clients and the great outcomes that we can achieve through building collaborative relationships with our valued clients.

To book an appointment with the Pharmacotherapy Nurse please call **6122 8080**.

