

HONEYBEE

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

SEE
ME
NOT MY
Disability



Brand
New
Lifestyle
Website
NOW LIVE!

WAKE
PRAY
SLAY



Be your
own kind
of beautiful
♡

What's *inside*

Edition II - 2023

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Editor-in-Chief
Melissa Dumitru

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to Honeybee

SEE ME NOT MY DISABILITY!

I've thought about the above statement many times when meeting new people or attending a work meeting.

I've also endured being treated differently as a colleague even though I have the right qualifications. People are often amazed that I even work, let alone all the work I do. I usually hear how inspiring I am...The respect level moves up a notch.

I have learned to ignore discomfort and outright fear to my oxygen, life support pump, and hickman line in my chest. When I get fully immersed in conversation and don't breathe frequently enough, my oxygenator alarms. This often causes someone to blurt out, **"You're not going to die are you?"**

It's not completely people's fault though. If you look around in our general community you won't see a lot of people mixing in public with disabilities. Oh sure the food halls are full of them with their support workers, but that is hardly a true representation of our society.

General advertising is finally including many of us in catalogues and TV adverts now. It's a bit generalised but it's better than nothing. We still don't have people with different disabilities and health conditions being showcased for talents beyond the work that relates to an individuals disability or condition.

So many times we are only seen as a 'patient' or someone who is sick or disabled. We are pigeonholed and boxed up neatly into ways that make others feel more comfortable.

I truly believe that if society as a whole doesn't start to normalise these other hidden parts of our community by including everyone in every way possible, that we may never move forward.

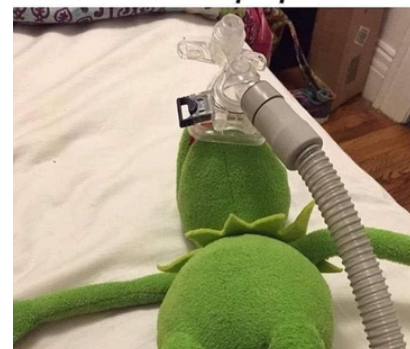
Perhaps it's time to make everyone feel a little uncomfortable?

Let's normalise people with disabilities being experts in things beyond disability.

There are many benefits to acknowledging, including, and normalising the disabled community and the many people living with invisible illnesses. Why don't we start thinking a little more broadly and open our minds and hearts to everyone in our community.

Settle in and enjoy all we have on offer for you this issue. Happy Reading.

Me after I put the fitted sheet on the bed by myself



Love & blessings always Melissa xx

Meet the CONTRIBUTORS

It takes a lot of hard work to compile a lifestyle magazine and guide our readers to a more mindful and intentional life while living with all our extra challenges. The powerful stories and engaging content from our dedicated lived experience experts are so greatly appreciated.



Jacqueline De Grussa

Sociologist specialising in the area of Trauma, Addiction & Recovery, Founder Women's & Men's Recovery Community, Founder and Managing Director, Recovery Collective Ltd, Facebook.com/womensrecoverycommunity

Jacqueline consults for an indigenous organisation, developing various new culturally specific recovery-based projects. Her Women's Recovery Community and Men's Recovery Community offer 24/7 support in WA, interstate and overseas. Jacqui is the Managing Director of The Recovery Collective Inc. She is a mother to three children, and is a documentary buff. Jacqui is passionate about all things that empowers our most vulnerable on their recovery journeys.



Angela Famiano

Masters Social Science (Counselling & Psychotherapy) Grad Cert Disability Studies Bachelor of Arts, Psychology Family & Children Services Diploma Community Services/Child Services 0-15 yrs

Angela is an accomplished Counsellor specialising in alcohol & other drugs. She has a special interest in men's advocacy and believes that counselling is not so much about fixing things, but acknowledging them and working with your strengths. Her vision is to be part of people's journey to self-improvement and helping them find a place that makes them truly happy.



Helen Blanchard (Lifestyle Editor)

Lived Experience Expert - Registered Nurse Specialist (retired) Diploma of Arts Psychotherapy - Health Educator (Published)

Helen has a wealth of experience, knowledge and practical skills gained over more than 35 years working in a variety of senior roles within the health, community service and not-for-profit settings. She has a lived experience of chronic illness, and is passionate about creating and sharing health-related education information and resources. Helen is committed to advocating for a person-centred approach to health care and has a particular interest in the expressive therapies and art as a therapy for people living with chronic illness.



Dianne Murphy

Carer Representative (Palliative Care) Carer & Disability Advocate NDIS Carers Event Coordinator Business & Administration Manager

Dianne has worked in the Business & Administration field for over 40 years. She is also a Carer & Disability Advocate who supports her adult children (all with disabilities). Di is the Founder of Creative Carers whose focus is around art, craft, and nurturing mental health. Inclusion is very important to Di. She coordinates a social group called "Staying Connected" for those who care for others, and she is an organiser and coordinator for Retreats & Events to celebrate Carers in the community.



Jackie Rowe



Qualified Mindset Coach - Training Facilitator Advanced Psych K Practitioner - Motivational Speaker Certified Women's Circle Facilitator focus_coaching@outlook.com - www.focuscoaching.com.au

Jackie is a University qualified Life Coach, Strengths Based Practitioner, Psych K Facilitator, and Women's Circle Facilitator. With a background in Early Childhood Years, Families and Community, Jackie now works predominantly with women to empower and inspire. Her vision is for all women to realise their amazing true potential, to speak their truth without fear and live a life they love.

Fay Bahemia (Copyeditor)

Winner "40 Under 40" & multiple Community Awards Cert IV Professional Writing & Editing Cert IV Community Services BSc (Microbiology & Pharmacology) Grad Dip Food Science & Technology Clinical Trials Coordinator in Radiation Oncology

Fay has worked and volunteered with peer-support groups and NFPs, helping them to reach their goals and visions through freelancing. She has held key industry positions in quality assurance, regulatory affairs, biomedical research and manufacturing, training, and communications in various sectors. Fay has a lived experience which changed her life trajectory in 2015. She is an avid dancer, lover of visual art and a fan of beautiful cars. She has a quirky nature that draws people to her. Fay is meticulous in all she does, and I am thrilled to have her on our team as our Technical Editor and Copyeditor.

Hayley Solich

Connecting Communities to make positive change Consultant Advisor Mental Health Sector linkedin.com/in/hayleysolich Website hayleysolich.com.au Blog goldenpen.com.au Blog The Gold Digger



A multi-award-winning community engagement and Lived Experience professional who is nationally active in advocating for change in the mental health system. Hayley builds capacity and awareness to create social change by listening to the perspectives of others, validating and uplifting them. She uses her creativity, communication, leadership, facilitation and engagement skills to influence change at the highest levels.

Marie Williams



Founder, The Platform WA Intellectual Disability Advocate and Change-Maker Mental Health Educator for WA Recovery College Alliance Certificate III in Education Support E: theplatformwa@gmail.com

Marie founded The Platform WA, a new community group focussing on intellectual disability for young adults like her daughter, Laura. Marie has been trained in Leadership and Mental Health education to become a WA Recovery College Alliance educator, where she co-designs courses aimed at people living with intellectual disability. She is a change-maker working at the coal face to improve perception and awareness. She has several years' experience working in non-profit charity sector, and the early childhood field as a teaching assistant.

Jaymee-Lee Farrelly

Bachelor of Primary and Secondary Education (Honours)
Former Disability Support Worker (2.5 years)
Facebook Blog: My Chronically Breathtaking Sister

Jaymee-Lee is the creator of a Facebook blog called 'My Chronically Breathtaking Sister' – a blog dedicated to her late sister, Rachael, who lived with a chronic lung condition. Her blog aims to bring awareness to often unspoken topics, to educate others on chronic illnesses and organ transplants/donation, to help manage her grief and to carry on her sister's legacy. Jaymee-Lee has a passion for providing equitable opportunities to those around her and plans to predominantly work with EAL and disabled students once she graduates her teaching degree at the end of 2022.



Mystery Writer

The Girl in the Silk Green Dress - Fiction

The writer behind the "Girl in the Silk Green Dress" is someone with many years' writing experience. This mystery writer studied Journalism and has a very good understanding of social justice and community. I approached this mystery writer to offer a fictional character storyline that we can all enjoy and look forward to. I hope you enjoy their work as much as we are enjoying sharing it with you.

Jenny Gleeson



Educator & Facilitator
Disruptor and Annoyer (In a caring way)
Expert Personality Dimensions Profiler
A person known to help people get their shizzle together!
Website: www.jennygleeson.com.au

Jenny started as a Secondary English Teacher but then became extremely disillusioned with the Education System (it didn't take long - less than a year), which led her into completing a Graduate Certificate of Career Development, leading her to work with youth at risk, people with disability, First Nations people and winning National and State Awards. Jenny was diagnosed with depression and anxiety (way before the terms were even heard of by mainstream Perth-ites) at the age of 11 and institutionalised at the age of 13. Although anxiety is still in her life, she keeps it in the periphery of her vision, accepting and acknowledging it is there but it doesn't control her anymore. Her drive in life is to assist people be the best they can be...warts and all!



Kez Wickham St George



www.kezwickhamstgeorge.com
[linkedin.com/in/kez-w-stgeorge](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kez-w-stgeorge)

Kez Wickham St George is an award-winning author who champions people from diverse backgrounds to reveal the best of their creative side. As a leader in her profession, a public speaker, an accomplished author in magazines, Kez leverages her extensive travels, experience, and expansive authorship to encourage readers to think outside the box. It is not surprising that Kez is known globally as 'The Writers Consultant'. Kez has written work for two royal families, one in the UK, the other in Sweden. She has co-compiled an anthology on the lives of various women internationally. Recently Kez published a trilogy of poetry books and her dream of the big screen was realized when a movie was made from the prologue of her last novel Scribe in the trilogy Campfires. Kez is passionate about promoting high-quality growth opportunities for all.



Melissa Dumitru



Creative Director & Editor-in-Chief Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine and Website. Community Services Consultant. Mental Health Educator WA Recovery College Alliance. Support Group Facilitator for The Tastebuds Club. Lived Experience Patient Expert for Merakoi (PAH). LinkedIn - Instagram - Facebook: @chronicallyinspiredau Website: www.chronicallyinspired.com.au Passionate Changemaker & Influencer

Melissa has worked in the Community Services Self Help & Support Group sector for over 20 years. She is a multi award winning Patient Expert and Lived Experience Professional. She is a passionate changemaker and influencer representing inclusion, integrity, innovation and promotion within the fields of chronic illness, disability, and mental health conditions. Melissa loves interior design and decorating. She is an avid baker and home cook.



Laura Williams

Founder The Platform WA Community Support Group Certificate II Customer Engagement Socials @theplatformwa
 Lover of music, dance and TV medical dramas

I try to be a role model to my little sister and others in the intellectually disabled community. I was born with Down syndrome but that doesn't stop me from being who I am. I work in the city at a 5-star Hotel called Pan Pacific Perth. They support me through their open employment program. Please help us to grow the platform WA page and my support group page for young adults living with intellectual disability. Enjoy my recipes from Laura's Kitchen.



Letisha Living

Author of Finding Yourself After Stroke Stroke Recovery and Empowerment Coach Consumer Advisory Committee Gold Coast Health & Hospital Service Diploma of Mental Health Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach Socials: @LetishaLiving @FindingYourselfAfterStroke Email: letisha@findingyourselfafterstroke

Letisha is a survivor of stroke who is passionate about raising awareness for stroke and the challenges that arise adjusting to life after stroke. She uses her lived experiences to assist in improving outcomes for others by partnering with researchers, universities, stroke organisations, health and hospital services. Letisha loves being in nature, cooking and spending time with her children.



Know me for my abilities not my disability!



Express YOURSELF to Better Health

Contributor Helen Blanchard - Lifestyle Editor



I am more than my Disability or Chronic Illness

"There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more." Robert M. Hensel

Unfortunately, there is a long history of dehumanization and discrimination of people with a disability here in Australia and worldwide. In Australia from the 1970s, there was more focus on the human rights and needs of those living with a disability, but while things began to change, progress has been frustratingly slow over the decades.

Statistics from the Australian Network on Disability show that over 4.4 million people in Australia are living with some form of disability, and 11.6 million people are living with one or more chronic illnesses. Meeting the needs of this very large group of people from different age groups, genders, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds, is an enormous societal challenge.

People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, have poor-quality or insecure housing, low levels of workforce participation and education, and be socially excluded or marginalized; they may also face violence and discrimination related to their disability and have difficulty accessing appropriate health care (The World Health Organisation (WHO) & World Bank Group, 2011). Disability discrimination accounts for the highest volume of complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission annually (Disability Employment Services (DES) provider at Work Australia, 2020).

Despite all the gains made since the 1970s, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Here are five things I feel we can do to accelerate change:

1. Raise awareness and challenge stereotypes, negative attitudes, and perceptions.
2. Acknowledge, accept, and respect diversity in all of its forms.
3. Educate ourselves about what equality and inclusion should look like.
4. Read or view stories about people with a lived experience of disability or chronic illness.
5. Support people and programs that aim to ensure those with a disability or chronic illness are both seen, heard, included, and promoted.

Thank you for reading this article and I hope you will take the time to have a look at the following links that I have chosen for you.

<https://www.seemeforme.sa.gov.au>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/stories.html>

[https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/be-fair-childhood-without-](https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/be-fair-childhood-without-barriers#:~:text=The%20idea%20is%20to%20raise%20awareness%20about%20the,society%20on%20an%20equal%20basis%20with%20other%20children.)

[barriers#:~:text=The%20idea%20is%20to%20raise%20awareness%20about%20the,society%20on%20an%20equal%20basis%20with%20other%20children.](https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/be-fair-childhood-without-barriers#:~:text=The%20idea%20is%20to%20raise%20awareness%20about%20the,society%20on%20an%20equal%20basis%20with%20other%20children.)

Until next time,

Helen

“

There is no greater
disability in
society, than the
inability to see a
person as more."

Robert M. Hensel

”



“I don’t
care what
anyone
thinks.”

Michael,
likes pineapple
on pizza.

SEE ME FOR ME
not my disability

seemeforme.sa.gov.au





A Walk in my Shoes

Contributor
Dianne Murphy



Invisible Me

A young life enjoying the simple things like
sunny days & day dreaming.

To growing up & living a life, working hard,
falling in love & becoming a wife.

To feeling the joy of becoming a mum,
three kids in all, a daughter and two sons.

Caring for parents, our children too, the
stress, the sadness, I'm feeling blue.

Where is the help? Is it just up to me?
What is the new word DISABILITY.

Why am I now treated so differently, and
where is the help and the treatment?

Sickness, sadness and desperation, of
being left behind in isolation.

Mobility issues...where are my tissues!

The judgement, the stares, the
discrimination for being a bit different. Oh
the frustration!

Advocacy for inclusion and becoming a
strong community voice for better
opportunities and having a choice.

No-one sees the courage and determination
of the work I do to change our nation.

Please know that some disabilities are not
always visible.

Some are chronic illnesses and intellectual.

We all want to live happily in our
communities so let's shift the focus to all of
our abilities.



Not all disabilities
are visible

Love, Dianne ♡

COMMUNITY

Casson Homes Inc Healing Gardens Project



Why a community garden? Why not? Sustainability is key to our communities and learning skills set to grow your own produce, to contribute to the ecology of the land benefitting all who choose to collectively provide solutions to our sustainability.

The Community Garden is aimed at addressing the many challenges and barriers for vulnerable people with mental health issues and disabilities. The project provides an innovative platform for Casson support staff to build their relationship with participants in a normalised environment of a community garden that organically engages a diverse group whose common interest is to learn and grow their own produce. Fun activities included collecting the eggs, feeding Tash the resident horse, planting, weeding, music, mindful meditation, sound healing. It is a whirlwind gust of magical creativity, collectively and each adding their own sparkle.

Casson Homes has a long history as leaders in mental health, maintenance, using evidence-based modalities and practices to improve mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Established by Sussan Casson MBE JP in 1922, four generations of the Casson family have provided leadership to ensure that a 100-year service history continues to inform contemporary service responses to marginalized people and disadvantaged groups.

Casson Homes currently provides for over 300 people who have been at risk of homelessness and discharged from secure treatment centres. Our residents receive the best care to improve their mental health, reintegration back into community life, and live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

Our motto "Everyone is Welcome"

In response to contemporary mental health recovery and educational modalities, Casson set up Mental Health Recovery in Action series, one of the educational components involved the setting up of a Community Garden.

Setting up a membership-based committee allows for organic leadership to occur and inter- personal skills of engaging, communicating, resolving, making decisions are at the core of any person's recovery. These actions align with Casson's three Pillars of Engagement, Empowerment and Enablement, our overarching five guiding principles of Recovery in Action, Communication, Community, Connection, Compassion, Cook.

The garden becomes both a therapeutic environment for well-being and a pathway to deepen connection to re-engaging in meaningful relationships. Isolation, loneliness and feeling disconnected can be an issue when people are unwell. Activities of establishing the community garden will help support people with mental health issues and disabilities to become resilient and independent individuals.

With local government funding and an Memorandum of Understanding with Janice Griffiths, owner of a five-acre farm outside Joondalup, we began our 12-week trial. GaiHeartWisdom Christel and Charles were engaged to teach all about permaculture and respect for the land.



Lydia Cubage was invited to Educate the group on her creative talent of producing amazing hanging baskets.

How I taught a group to grow hanging baskets for joy

“One of the most rewarding experiences I had as a participant in the ‘Healing Gardens 12-week trial.

I was to be asked to teach a group of people how to grow hanging baskets for Joy. Hanging baskets are containers suspended from a structure or a hook, where plants can grow vertically or cascade down. They are ideal for small spaces or adding colour and beauty to any place.

“I agreed to teach this workshop because I wanted to share my passion for gardening and my knowledge of plants that can bring people joy like it has done for me. I chose plants that have bright colours, pleasant fragrances, or symbolic meanings, such as:



Geraniums. These are flowering plants that come in an assortment of colours, such as red, pink, white or purple. They have a sweet scent, and they symbolize friendship, happiness, and positive emotions.



Lavender. This is an aromatic herb that has purple flowers. It has a calming effect and symbolises peace, tranquillity, and harmony.



Marigolds. These are annual plants that have yellow or orange flowers. They have a spicy aroma, symbolising warmth, optimism, and joy.



Mint. This is an edible herb that has green leaves. It has a refreshing taste and smell, symbolising vitality, energy, and freshness.



Petunias. These annual plants have trumpet-shaped flowers in diverse colours, such as blue, purple, pink, or white. They have a mild fragrance, symbolising gratitude, admiration, and happiness.

I taught the group how to prepare the baskets with soil, compost and fertiliser; how to choose the right plants for their preferences and conditions; how to arrange the plants in an aesthetically pleasing way; how to water them regularly; how to prune them when needed; how to protect them from pests and diseases; and how to enjoy their beauty every day.

The workshop was a success. The participants were enthusiastic, curious, and creative. They learned new skills, had fun, and expressed their personalities through their baskets. They also bonded with each other over their shared interest in gardening.



HOW COMMUNITY GARDENING IMPROVED MY MENTAL HEALTH

Teaching this workshop was not only beneficial for the participants but also for me. I felt happy to share my passion with others who appreciated it. I felt proud of myself for being able to teach something valuable and enjoyable. I felt inspired by the diversity and beauty of the plants and the baskets. I felt connected to nature and the people around me. It also helped me to forget that I had Parkinson's disease.

Community gardening has improved my mental health in many ways. It has helped me cope with stress, anxiety, and depression. It has given me a sense of purpose, achievement, and creativity. It has boosted my mood, self-esteem, and confidence. It has strengthened my social connections, support and belonging.

Community gardening has also brought joy to my life. Joy is a positive emotion that is characterised by feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and well-being. Joy can be experienced differently through gratitude, awe, curiosity, playfulness, or generosity. Joy can also be cultivated by engaging in meaningful, enjoyable, fulfilling activities.



Community gardening is one of those activities that can cultivate joy. It allows me to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature, explore new possibilities and challenges, have fun, express myself, and give back to the community and the environment.

I hope I have inspired you to try community gardening or to continue with it if you are already involved. I also hope it has shown you how community gardening can boost your mental health and joy.”

Happy Gardening!

Lydia Cubbage: Registered Nurse
spiritedmentalhealthnurse@gmail.com
Casson Communities, the NDIS providers of Casson Homes will with government funding set up a Community Garden “Growing your Brighter Future” on their South Guilford 2-acre property.

Casson recently received a grant from Heathway to produce a Living Well Program which involves Permaculture Education and Nutrition.

For Bookings with Casson Communities and expressions of interest on our programs
Contact ndis@cassonhomes.com.au
Telephone: (08) 92215629

Resources: : Starting a community garden - CGA
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>
<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/>
<https://www.verywellmind.com>



YOUR RECOVERY STORY : YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS



Join us...

Share your story of recovery using photography as your creative outlet, concluding the project with an exhibition.

Help break the stigma of mental illness, mental distress, and other mental health conditions through the creative process of photography.

Your recovery story is an opportunity for anyone in recovery to tell dynamic stories and demonstrate how people living with mental illness and disability can be nurtured and empowered through individualised creative support structures.

Included is a session on Therapeutic Dialogues to confidentially share your story and how best to capture your journey and translate it into visual art - your art!

Photography therapy provides a safe space to explore 'art for arts sake' in your way. Engaging in creativity in this way can aid recovery as it helps you to focus, relax, and express yourself. We will have a mix of classroom activities and excursions of your choice to take your photographs.

At the conclusion of the sessions we will have an exhibition.

4-hour sessions held weekly throughout the year - Exhibition May 2024

FREE to participants - thanks to the support of Lotterywest.

COME AND JOIN US, LEARN A NEW SKILL, EXPRESS YOUR STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS, CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE AND HELP REDUCE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL ILLNESS.

Where: Sessions are held at Casson Communities (256 Walcott Street, Menora North Perth) and will include excursions to a variety of locations to capture your story.

You will learn the basics of how to use a digital camera including:

- using filters and adjusting your photographs
- use of lighting
- use of memory cards with the computer
- how to print your shots
- use of black and white and colour options

ALL EQUIPMENT
SUPPLIED

For Further information or to book your space:

Margaret Lawlor, Project Coordinator.

margaret.lawlor@cassoncommunities.com.au



This program is part of Casson Homes' Mental Health Recovery in Action Series



Creating an Inspired Life

Contributor **Letisha Living**

Empowered Stroke Survivor

Ten years ago, I was the Head of Operations for an Aged Care provider in Australia. I thought I was living my dream of being an independent mum, earning a decent income and living each day as I chose.

All my hopes, plans and dreams changed in an instant when I became a survivor of stroke. I lay in a hospital bed feeling uncertain – not just about my future, but that of my kids too.

I lost the vision on the right side of both of my eyes, had numbness down the right side of my body.

My right hand doesn't work as it used to, I have trouble balancing and at times swallowing. I could no longer drive or return to my place of employment, which meant I no longer had an income.

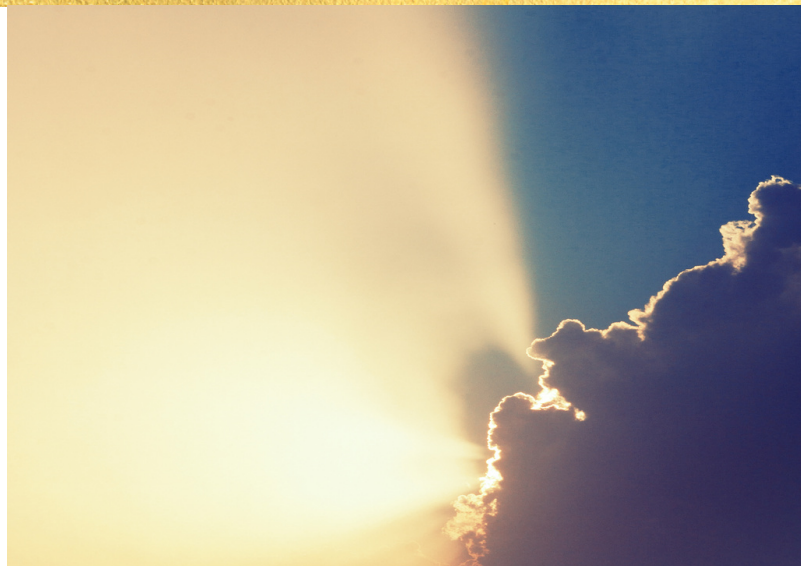
On the outside, to everyone else, I looked just the same. Internally, everything had changed for me.

No one could see my visual impairment, my neuro-fatigue, the weakness on my right side, nor could they see how I was feeling – it felt like a complete loss of self.

Find the Silver Lining

It took me a while to adjust to post-stroke life. I grieved for my "old self". I spent a lot of time thinking about all the things that I had lost, and I didn't think to appreciate all the things that I still had.

Once I shifted my mindset to a place of acceptance, I felt an immense feeling of gratitude. All the little things became the big things. I would feel so much about being able to walk my kids to school, instead of that loss of not being able to drive them. I would feel so much about what I could still see - being able to view all the colours in the sky and the abundance that exists in nature.



I had 2 Choices:

1. Give in and be reduced to a survivor (victim) of stroke, or
2. Create my own future!

Today I am a member of my Hospital and Health Service's Consumer Advisory Group where I sit on several committees. My input as a person with lived experience is valued.

I partner with researchers across Australia in research projects to improve outcomes for those who will follow me in their experience with stroke.

I have a successful post-stroke empowerment coaching business where I help others to Live with Confidence after Stroke.

More than that - I am a mum to four amazing sons, a music and nature lover, and a person with a kind heart that values deep and meaningful connections with others!

*Kindness Empowers,
Love Letisha*

“I’m not
changing
for
anyone.”

Charlie,
Crocs and socks
enthusiast.



SEE ME FOR ME
not my disability

seemeforme.sa.gov.au



From the Heart

Contributor Jacqueline De Grussa



I am me

I am a woman who has lived a very, very full life.

Full of trauma, tragedy, pain, loss, shame.

Full of beauty, awe, laughter, joy and love.

I am many things... there have been so many versions of me over the years, that I now sink deliciously into my complexity with complete acceptance of all my selves.

Some may call me unhinged, crazy, too-muchness.

Yes, my dearest. I am all of those things.

My heart is wild – free yes, rage-full over inequity... yes.

Some call me inspirational, powerful, a force of nature.

Yes, my love. I am all of those things.

I choose to lean in to life – unapologetically.

I choose to find balance with all the different versions of me.

Trauma seizures – now are nurtured with warm blankets, nourishing food, chamomile tea and pjama days in front of the tv.

Mania leading to psychosis – understood, accepted, correctly medicated, self-cared and shared with others... means no more psychiatric stays for me.

Where once thought incompetent, incapable, broken and bad – I realised I just didn't have the right people around me. Now I do, anything is possible.

My medical complexities from chronic mental illness deepened with the diagnosis of a rare genetic condition – major surgery and lifetime monitoring... why not? I came here to live and learn, baby.

My daughter's journey with complex chronic illness – lead me to also take better care of myself. She is a true gift of the creator... she showed me ways to find strength when I was sure there was none left.

I am a sum of my experiences, yes. I am also none of those things.

When I become very quiet and still... when I conquer the next hill – I am Jacqui.

Quirky, smart, funny, kind... I need to rest often, and deeply.

I love history, music, nature, yoga, walking, travel, scary movies, dancing, and bingeing anything that engages my mind and makes me laugh.

I'm a long game, big-picture kinda gal.

I won't allow anyone in my life now... who disrespects my shine.

I mean business, like order and equanimity.

I can reach people; society doesn't know how to help effectively.

My story – where once there was confusion and a slow-moving train wreck... now a deep-rooted, expanding oak tree. Grounded, centered and growing.

You see... I'm not my disability – I am me.

Jacqueline

BE Nourished

Contributor Jackie Rowe



I am not all you see
I am not all you hear
Why do you stop at my skin
Do you not wonder what might be
If you look to the miracle within
My heart beats just as yours does
I feel joy and I feel pain
Not being seen or heard
Can drive me insane.
Did you know your body is only a case
To hold the essence of you within
Don't assume this body of mine
Look for my essence within
My words may not flow a way that you know
But I still have plenty to say
I am like you a miracle
An energy being in this world
We are in fact the same
My body does not define me
Just as yours does not define you
We are more than this body we were gifted
We are more than how we think and do
We each bring our own uniqueness
Creating a collective humankind
We are one and nothing without each other
I am, you are
A miracle

Jackie



"People always ask me, "You have so much confidence,
Where did that come from?"

"It came from me".

"One day I decided that I was beautiful, and so I
carried out my life as if I was a beautiful girl..."

*It doesn't have anything
to do with how the world perceives you.*

What matters is what you see.

*Your body is your temple, it's your home,
you must decorate it."*

Gabourey Sidibe - Actress

Chronically Booked

With world renowned writer Kez Wickham St George



The Colours of Me A collection of colourful stories

The Anthology of the '**Colours of Me**' began as a seed of an idea with Kez Wickham St George who once chatting with her fellow authors realized they all had a worthwhile story to tell.

The title '**Colours of Me**' was chosen as they felt it enfolded all the authors and their individual stories.

Each story will bring the reader on a soul-filled journey that will leave the individual author's stories in their hearts.

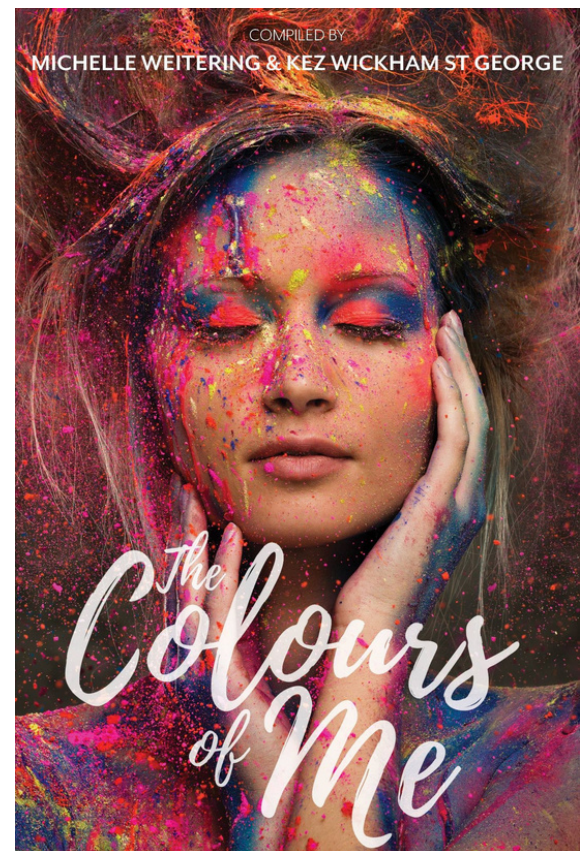
For many of us who read this anthology of compassion and empathy we know we are not alone, and others will feel blessed that they have not endured that shade of colour in their lifetime.

Collectively this book has the power to bring understanding and insights into the hearts and minds of others, creating a deep empathy plus an understanding that we truly don't know what goes on behind the scenes of other womens lives.

This beautiful book of compassion and empathy has won the hearts of many readers, let is win your heart too.

Kez Wickham St George Book Reviews

Kez is a gifted best-selling award-winning author, a global writer's consultant and writers Consultant, who is very passionate about championing people from diverse backgrounds to tell their stories and write with passion. Hence Kez Book Reviews was created. As a leader in her profession, she has spoken nationally and globally, sharing her wisdom and knowledge about the process of writing. Kez contributes to a number of regular magazines, sharing her insights. She has also coordinated and compiled a number of anthologies. Across her writers community she is known for her ability to empower people to write through creative writing workshops. Kez has co-produced / co-hosted a weekly TV and radio show highlighting the work of authors across the world. She has since gone on to produce a short film from the prologue of her last novel Scribe, shown across theatres in Australia.



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writers

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine exists to reinforce the purity of one message: "The Lived Experience and Patient Expert!"

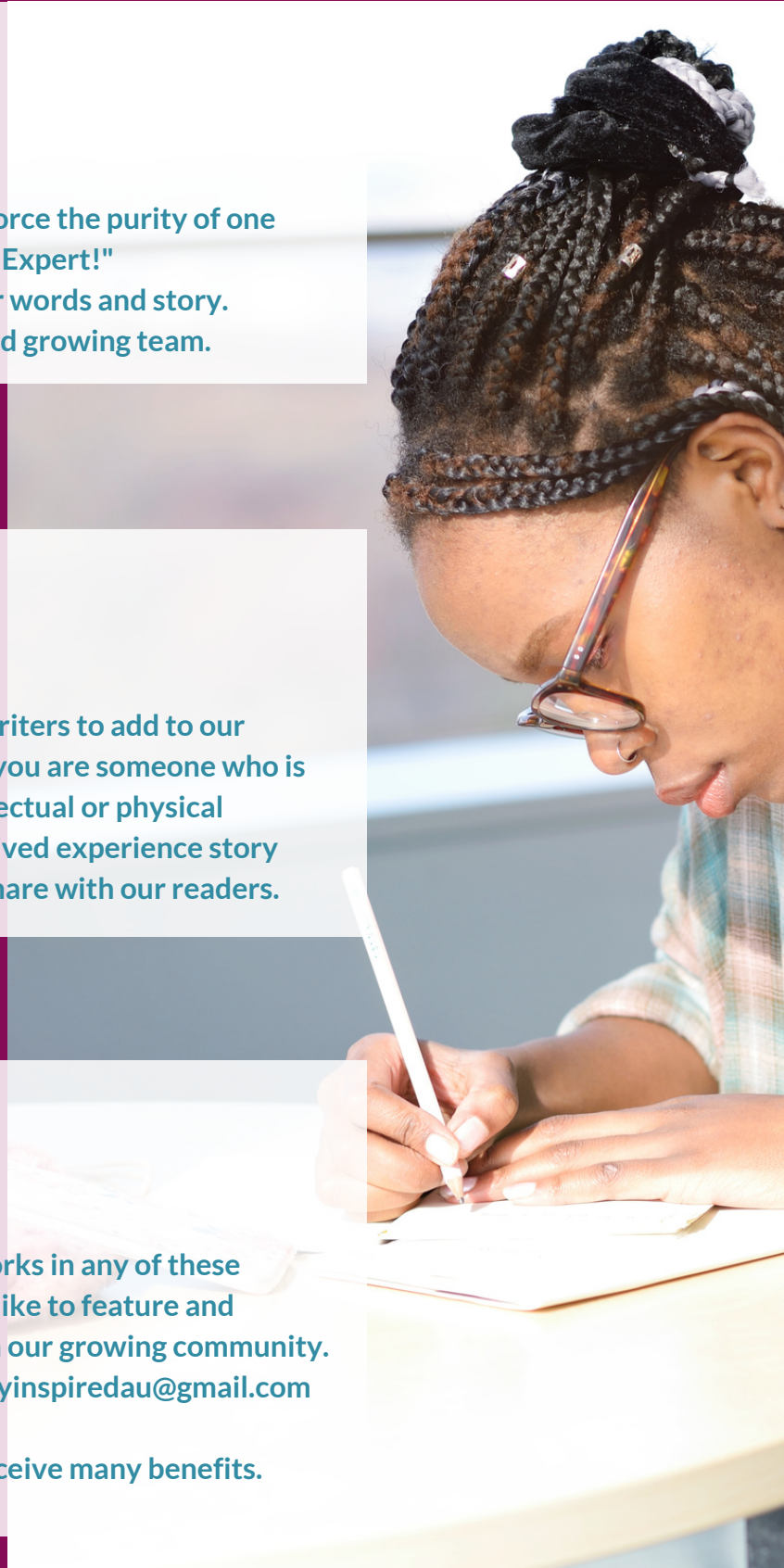
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We are looking for experienced or aspiring writers to add to our amazing team from multiple backgrounds. If you are someone who is caring for, or living with chronic illness, intellectual or physical disability or a mental health condition, your lived experience story may be exactly what we like to feature and share with our readers.

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If you are an organisation or business that works in any of these industries supporting others, then we would like to feature and showcase your services and/or products with our growing community. To be considered send us an [email](mailto:chronicallyinspiredau@gmail.com): chronicallyinspiredau@gmail.com we look forward to hearing from you. You can also become a valued partner and receive many benefits.





Welcome to Laura's Kitchen

Dessert recipes through the seasons

Hello

My kitchen is all about fun, colourful food, and eating for enjoyment. In 2023 I will be following the seasons with my recipes, and I hope you enjoy them as much as I do.

For this edition I have decided to feature a birthday cupcake recipe as September is my birthday month! I am a total Oreo addict and we have put together this easy recipe for you to enjoy on your birthday, or anytime of the year. Happy Baking.

Love Laura x

Oreo Madness!



Ingredients for Cupcakes

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 3rd cup (76gm) unsalted butter
- Half cup (100gm) white sugar
- 1 egg
- Quarter cup milk
- pinch of salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 8 Oreos crushed (to go in the batter)
- 12 Oreos (whole, for the bottom of the cupcake liners)

Ingredients for Frosting

- Half cup (227gm) unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 1 cup powdered sugar (icing sugar mix)
- 3 Oreos crushed (to stir through mixture)
- Mini Oreos for decoration on top

Serving Suggestion

Oreo cupcakes are best served at room temperature. You can refrigerate them, but I would suggest bringing them back to room temperature before enjoying. There doesn't have to be a reason to eat Oreo cupcakes, so go ahead and make them just because!

Instructions

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180c (350 F) and line your baking tray with cupcake liners.
- In a large bowl, sift the flour, baking powder, & salt. Set aside.
- In another bol, whisk the butter and sugar together till it's light and creamy, add in the egg and vanilla extract and mix until combined.
- Add the flour and milk in batches alternatively into the butter mixture.
- Add crushed Oreos and gently combine.
- Place one whole Oreo cookie at the bottom of the cupcake liner and fill up to three quarters with the batter. Bake for 18-22 mins, test to see if cooked by piercing with a toothpick to see if it comes out clean.
- Once baked, leave them to cool completely before frosting.
- In a large bowl, cream the butter for 1-2 mins till it's light and fluffy. Add the icing mixture in batches and keep mixing.
- Then add the crushed Oreos and mix. Decorate the cupcakes by placing a mini cookie on top.



“Are you feeling okay?”

I'd all but stumbled through the respiratory ward for my afternoon appointment, and now that I was finally sitting, I was starting to feel the impacts of the day's antics. However, I wasn't about to let the doctor know that. The last thing I needed was to be admitted and put on bed watch. Friday was only two days from now, and I was not going to miss my first shift and a chance at meeting Conor Merrick.

“Fine. Just tired.”

The doctor frowned, assessing the numbers on the monitor. “Your heart rate is particularly high today. Is there anything that might have triggered that?”

You mean like a high-speed car chase and a near collision with a locomotive?

I shook my head, and feigned surprise. She didn't look convinced.

“Your housemate has mentioned in the past that you have trouble relaxing...”

Damn Kayla and her meddling mouth.

“I know my limits.” I smiled tightly.

“Nevertheless, I feel the need to remind you that this condition can quickly worsen if you don't take care of yourself.” She gently pushed my oxygen tank towards me. “That also means following your prescribed oxygen therapy routine.”

I rolled my eyes and hooked the tubing comfortably around my ears and into my nasal passage before standing to leave.

“Well, well. Look what the cat dragged in.”

I'd barely made it past the double doored exit of the hospital when Zoe's voice came from behind me. I turned and smiled, my eyes taking in her pink hair which she'd styled into spikes, giving her a more edgy look than the last time I'd seen her. This time she wore oversized purple overalls with a white tube top underneath, and her white sneakers were speckled with pink diamantés that looked like they'd been hand-glued on.

She looked me up and down. “For someone who's not sick, you sure look like shit.”

I laughed loudly. “Says the girl who looks like she raided a five-year-old's wardrobe.” I motioned towards her shoes. “Did you make those in the craft session last week?”

She opened her mouth to retaliate, but an older couple walked between us toward the entrance, interrupting her train of thought. The woman eyed my oxygen and gave me a pitying look. “Oh, you poor dear.” She tutted loudly, then made her way into the building, muttering something to her husband about how cruel life can be.

I felt anger building in my chest and, thankfully, Zoe grabbed a hold of my arm, bringing my attention back to her before I decided to say something I'd regret. “Let's go for a drive.”

I frowned. “Where?”

She smiled deviously. “Somewhere we can have some fun.”

By 'fun', Zoe meant the local pub which, for 6pm on a Wednesday, was absolutely buzzing.

“Happy hour?” I raised an eyebrow.

“Worse.” She smirked. “Student night.”

As she waved to get the barman's attention, I scanned the room for a free seat, even though I knew it was unlikely. I was in dire need of a chair right now.



"Don't worry, they'll all migrate over there in a few minutes." Zoe handed me a beer and nodded towards the stage where a band was setting up.

"Fuschia Feelings?" I queried, reading the band name plastered on the signage hanging on the walls. "Never heard of them."

"They're locals." She took a look sip from her bottle. "But I have a feeling they'll make it big soon."

Judging by the crowd, I didn't doubt her. Sure enough, as she'd predicted, the crowds of youngsters moved towards the stage, freeing up the seating area. We found a comfortable space at a high table that offered a decent view of the band, and settled in for the show.

Zoe wasn't wrong; the band was good. Too good for playing pub gigs for a bunch of drunken teenagers. Their lead singer was a young woman with a similar style to Zoe. She had pale blonde hair with streaks of pink, and dark eye makeup that contrasted against her alabaster skin. Her voice was strong and husky, and she sang her way easily through cover songs and originals, delivered by the band with energy comparable to some of the greats.

It was my first real night out since I'd been diagnosed and, even just sitting, enjoying the music, and bantering with Zoe, it was the best night I'd had in a long time. Away from the medical appointments, and the stress of trying to prove that I belonged on the Force, I actually felt like a normal person again.

As the guitarist closed off the final song with a catchy riff, his eyes landed on Zoe, and I noticed she shifted uncomfortably in her chair. Tapping the singer on the shoulder, the guitarist stole the microphone from her hands.

"I'd like to give a shout out to a special guest who thought she could sneak in without us noticing... Miss Fuschia herself, Zoe Cunningham, everybody!"

As all eyes turned to us, Zoe's awkward smile disappeared, replaced with one of complete confidence. She stood and gave a dramatic curtsy, accepting the round of applause directed towards her.

When she sat back down and the crowd's attention returned to the band, she leaned in to me. "I forgot to tell you, this used to be my band."

My mouth dropped open. "What! I'm friends with the band?"

"Former lead singer." She winked. "Want me to sign your chest?"

I laughed. "What made you leave your own band?"

"Former lead singer." She winked. "Want me to sign your chest?"

I laughed. "What made you leave your own band?"

"What do you think?" She adjusted her pink hair suggestively, the wig moving easily with the grip of her hand. "Singing doesn't work so well when your breathing sucks."

"Damn." I took a swig of my beer, her words resonating more than she knew. "Sorry."

She shrugged. "The trick is to not let it define you."

I looked at her questioningly.

"Your condition." She glanced at my oxygen. "You're going to need that to survive, and it sucks. It means you can't do everything that you used to do." She motioned to the stage. "Singing until your voice is hoarse, dancing until your feet hurt. But it doesn't define who you are. Only you can do that. Find something that makes you happy."

I downed the rest of my beer and watched as the band began packing their instruments away.

"Did you find something?" I asked.

"Sewing." She grinned. "But according to some bitch in the hospital car park, I need some practice."

*The Girl in the Silk Green
Dress Will Return...*

this is me

Contributor Marie Williams



Minimum Viable Product/ Minimal Viable Person

When my daughter was born 23 years ago, she was automatically discriminated against simply because she was born with Down Syndrome. From the moment she took her first breath she was no longer given the chance or opportunities that other babies born on the same day would have. She was labelled. She wasn't seen as Laura; she was seen as Down Syndrome Laura - all because of her disability. This became her whole identity.

Society needs to change their perception of people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities. If they are given the right opportunities, what benefits could they contribute to society?

Take the following products: teabags and tissues – two products that were invented by accident and became very common products that are used daily in most households across the world.

Tissues were a byproduct of Kimberly-Clark's wartime effort to find a substitute for cotton. When the war ended, there were huge surpluses of Cellucotton and after several attempts, they re-launched the product as disposable tissues.

The teabag owes its origins to Thomas Sullivan, an American tea merchant, shipping out samples of his product in silk pouches. He didn't intend for his customers to put the pouches directly into hot water, but he listened to the feedback and with a bit of creativity, the teabag was created.

What can we learn by this, and how can we relate it to the intellectually disabled community, or the entire disabled community?

Instead of “*minimum viable product*”, we could say “*minimum viable person*”, because in today's society we see people with intellectual disability as less worthy of investment. If we look at teabags and tissues, they would not have been invented/created because they were not the main product; they were incidental, but have become multimillion-dollar industries.

It's the same principal if we support or include the intellectual community/disabled community into the business world. It is a huge opportunity which, if done correctly, could be turned into a multimillion-dollar industry. It would also create meaningful relationships and opportunities for people that are too often overlooked, simply because they have a disability.

This community makes up 15 percent of the population. Therefore if we design our business to support this community, we can open up a whole new world of possibilities. In addition, we are giving this community an invitation to be included in mainstream society. We may also learn through adopting a citizen-led approach so that we can actively participate and listen to each other.

The parent network of the intellectual community is very strong. An example of this is under NDIS funding. I needed a plan manager. I couldn't be bothered doing any research and asked my girlfriend if she would recommend hers. She advised me that she wouldn't. Unfortunately, this meant I had to do the research and find one. This situation could apply to many different areas, such as health, holidays, hairdressers, hospitality, fashion industry, cosmetics, etc. There are so many opportunities if companies/organisations started to directly cater for this community.

“Value Added” is another term that could be used by employing a person with an intellectual disability.

For example, if two companies are selling exactly the same product, but one was 50 cents more and employed a staff member with an intellectual disability, many people would be prepared to pay that extra 50 cents. Look at the bigger picture; if they go into your store for that product they may pick up another item as well.

This would not only be giving that person a sense of self-worth, and a sense of belonging, but it would also enable them to be part of a community and form meaningful connections. In some cases, it may lead to financial independence for this person.

Some people with intellectual disabilities may have physical limitations or not be able to communicate verbally. What benefit would there be employing a person like that?

People want to support others who are less able. Sponsoring a person who is unable to work and putting their story in your business's window may lead to sales. It would also educate "mainstream" society that these people are just like them, but don't have the same opportunities. Having this person visit your business with their support worker, will educate your staff and could lead to forming meaningful connections over time.

My end goal is that all students in education support schools have a company that is prepared to sponsor them once they leave school. This could be done in many different ways. How wonderful would it be for their parents to not have the burden of wondering, "What will happen to my child?" Often the mental health of parents who have children with intellectual disabilities is overlooked. Some of these families have more than one child with an intellectual disability. The daily burden is often overwhelming.

Employing people with intellectual disabilities allows an increased awareness in society of unconscious bias and an opportunity to change. It is time for society to invest in these people, to give them have a sense of purpose, and a sense of belonging as valued members of the community.

The isolation for many students with disabilities once they finish high school is huge.

Only 38% percent of people with intellectual disabilities have meaningful relationships. As a result, they feel less valued and if ignored, they will suffer from neglect, and may even die. Ann Marie Smith is a classic example of this – she had an NDIS plan and a service provider, but no connection with the local community. She died from neglect, simply because no one took the time to include her in their community.

Intellectually disabled people should not be viewed as a "Minimal Viable Person" but instead as a "Value Added Benefit" in what they could bring to your business.

Shout Out to Our Ruby Girl Cafe

This exciting cafe is rich with colour, variety and an amazing selection of food & beverages. As a small business they support the community in many ways including as an equal opportunity employer. **People living with disabilities are a regular addition to their team** and we wanted to acknowledge this as we think its fantastic. It's a shining example of what could be that we hope others will begin to follow.

Our Ruby Girl is an urban cafe & small batch providore showcasing local grown produce - Live music every Sunday and homewares. Located at: 2/64 Ley Street, Perth WA - Dine-In and Takeaway
@ourrubygirl.com Telephone: 0417 947 900 Email: hello@ourrubygirl.com
Dine-in - Outdoor seating - In-store pickup

Marie x



Son
Friend
Student
Citizen Athlete
Viewer Collector
Advocate Fund raiser
Employee Renter
Co-worker Spouse
Tax payer
Sibling Donor
Voter Dreamer
In-law Constituent
Confidant Hobbyist
Customer Neighbor
Leader Patient
Parishoner Contributor
Tenant Volunteer
Person House
Owner mate
Do-er
Ally



Do you see **me** or my disability?

Mosaic invites you to look again.

 **MOSAIC**
A life of possibilities for people
with intellectual disabilities.

TOP
TOPIC

Next Time...

ISSUE 12 - 2023

THE INCREDIBLE BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE



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PEOPLE ARE LIKE LEGO BLOCKS

You might well be wondering what people and Lego blocks have in common. Well, people, like Lego blocks, come in different shapes and sizes, different colours, and have the capacity to be more than what you first see when given the opportunity to be connected.

Too often we make the mistake of labelling people and trying to put them into nice, neat little boxes so that we don't have to deal with the mystery of the whole person. It is easier to see a person through a narrow lens than it is to broaden our perspective and consider there is more to that person than we first thought.

According to Forbes, within seven seconds of meeting someone, you will have a solid impression of who they are. Researchers suggest that within one tenth of a second you will have decided whether or not you trust that person.

People with disabilities and their carers often fall prey to conscious and unconscious bias from others. They are seen through the lens of their disability or caring responsibility instead of through the lens of their abilities.

As a carer of family members with a mental illness, there have been times when I have felt that my whole person was ignored. I experienced a minimisation of my broad skillset and being treated as if I needed to be "managed". It led me to wonder how many people living with a disability, be it physical or psychosocial, feel like this all the time? How often do other people see only disability and miss seeing the ability? When other people make choices on their behalf, or do things for them that they can do for themselves?

I have to say that I am in two minds about the recent rush of disability-focused media campaigns that hold up a person with disability and praise their accomplishments, like it is something amazing that they were able to do it. And yes, I do acknowledge that for many people with a disability, doing some things is definitely praiseworthy and I am totally in agreement with the fanfare. But not if it is tokenistic, or to be seen to be "inclusive", when in actual reality it is just a tick box activity and not real inclusion at all.

I recently heard of an employer who was happy to receive the bonus payment for hiring someone with a disability, but that employee was unable to do all that was asked of them. They had an intellectual disability, so were never going to be able to process information as quickly as their co-workers. Laying on them the expectation to be as fast as others is plain unfair. And why should they?

Would you ask other employees to do more than they are actually physically capable? No. So seeing ability does not mean ignoring functionality limitations. It means seeing the whole person and choosing to respect their right for choice and control in their life.



If you want to employ people with disabilities, then become a disabilities friendly employer. Don't employ people with a disability and make any assumptions by limiting or over-estimating their capacities. Have in-depth conversations and measure their performance against their capacity. It is grossly unfair to limit opportunities based on disability, and equally, to demand more than their capacity, based on your thoughts that they are taking the space of a "normal" employee. Be kind.

Inform yourself with facts, then make reasonable adjustments. But see the whole person!

Our family has been impacted by physical and mental health challenges. My partner works in a disabilities focused organisation. He works daily with people who need a bit more time and care to keep them in a healthy mindset about their life and work. He makes reasonable adjustments because he also has a disability, so he understands. Consequently, his crew are very engaged and love their job. It is not too difficult to do and ultimately, you get a return because those employees will be loyal to your business.

Bringing the conversation back to not seeing the whole person, I have met some truly amazing people over the years when I worked in magazines. I featured Jessica Smith, para-Olympian, on the cover of the second edition of Golden Pen Magazine. Jessica's disability was never an issue for me because she is a beautiful young woman with a great spirit and highly intelligent. She is not looking at herself through the lens of her disability, so why would I? I didn't see her disability because I was too busy engaging with the whole woman.

If you take the time to create opportunities for connection, then you may just be surprised by the person that sits behind the disability.

Hayley

Enjoy the following pages created just
for you from our special topics at

Destination Wellness

FIND
Beauty
IN THE SMALL
Things





How to Feel Less Lonely: 17 Practical Tips to Alleviate Loneliness



Before the COVID-19 pandemic exposed many fractures in our social connections, the problem of loneliness had already become prevalent in many communities.

There's now considerable evidence suggesting that compared with people in previous decades, we spend less time with family and friends. We have fewer close friends and are less involved in our communities. A recent study found that over half of the American population report feeling lonely.

While loneliness is at times a natural human emotion, extreme loneliness and its impact on mental wellbeing cannot be overstated. Loneliness has far-reaching consequences on both our mental and physical health.

This article will explore the mental and physical implications of extreme loneliness, shedding light on the importance of addressing this issue in today's interconnected yet increasingly isolated world.

In addition, we'll highlight several tips and resources you might be interested in if you're battling with this challenging emotion.

The Psychological Toll

Loneliness is not just a fleeting emotion; it can become a chronic state of mind.

Prolonged periods of isolation can lead to low mood and anxiety. When we feel disconnected from others, our self-esteem and self-worth can suffer. We may begin to question our social abilities, further isolating ourselves and creating a vicious cycle of social anxiety.

People may avoid social situations altogether to prevent the discomfort loneliness brings, but this avoidance only reinforces their isolation.

Depression, in particular, is strongly linked to loneliness. The feelings of hopelessness and despair that accompany depression can be exacerbated by the perception that no one cares or understands us.

A lonely person may withdraw from social interactions and lose interest in activities they once enjoyed, intensifying their sense of isolation.

Moreover, loneliness can hinder emotional regulation. When people lack the support and connection that comes from healthy relationships, they may struggle to manage their emotions effectively. This can lead to emotional instability and an increased vulnerability to mood swings.

The Physical Consequences

It's not just the mind that bears the brunt of loneliness; the body also suffers.

Chronic loneliness has been linked to a range of physical health issues, including cardiovascular problems, compromised immune function, and even a shorter lifespan. The stress associated with loneliness triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that, when consistently elevated, can lead to various health problems.

Additionally, lonely individuals are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours such as overeating, substance abuse, and inadequate sleep. These behaviours can further exacerbate physical health issues, creating a dangerous synergy between mental and physical wellbeing.



17 PRACTICAL TIPS TO ALLEVIATE LONELINESS

01 Take a closer look at the thoughts that run through your mind when you're feeling lonely. Are there recurring negative thoughts about your self-worth, your ability to connect with others, or your past experiences? Do you have a tendency to ruminate? Noticing and challenging these unhelpful thought patterns can be a very helpful tool for changing your emotional state.

02 Consider keeping a journal to express your thoughts and feelings. This can help you process your emotions and gain clarity on your feelings of loneliness - [here's a free printable.](#)

03 Try to be kind to yourself. Loneliness is a common experience (as mentioned, over half of the American population reports feeling this way). Feeling lonely doesn't define your worth as a person.

04 Pay attention to recurring patterns in your social interactions. Do you tend to feel lonelier after specific types of interactions or with certain individuals? Identifying these patterns can help you understand which social contexts or relationships might contribute to your loneliness.

05 Assess whether your expectations in social interactions are realistic and healthy. Sometimes, expecting too much from others in terms of their responsiveness or attention can lead to disappointment and feelings of loneliness. Adjusting your expectations to align with the realities of human interactions can help you approach social situations with a more balanced perspective.

06 **Recognize that vulnerability is a fundamental aspect of human connection.** Being vulnerable means allowing yourself to be open and honest about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences, even if they include insecurities or fears. How much do you lean into vulnerability? How emotionally available are you?

07 **Set realistic goals for social interactions,** such as attending one social event per week or reaching out to a friend regularly. The dopamine rush you get from your achievements helps reinforce new behaviour. Acknowledge and celebrate your efforts, even if they result in small steps toward reducing loneliness.

08 **Use practical tools such as The Relationship Challenge and The Social Connection Planner.**

09 **Attend social events – even if you feel hesitant.** These occasions can lead to unexpected connections and memorable experiences. Taking action despite feelings of low mood and anxiety is essential for escaping the vicious cycle of poor mental wellbeing.

10 **Exploring hobbies or activities you haven't tried before** can introduce you to new people and interests. Check out our Indoor and Outdoor Nourishing Activities Lists in our Free Tools Library for inspiration.

11 **Seek out clubs, classes, or organizations that align with your interests.** Consider volunteering for a cause you care about. These settings provide opportunities to meet like-minded people and foster new connections.

12 **Explore online forums, social media groups, or virtual events related to your hobbies or interests.** Engaging in online communities can help alleviate feelings of loneliness.

13 **Limit screen time.** Social media can exacerbate feelings of loneliness. Studies have found that Instagram is the worst platform for mental health. Consider setting boundaries on your technology use.

14 **Cultivate gratitude.** Focus on the positive aspects of your life. Regularly acknowledging and appreciating the good things you have enhances mental wellbeing.

15 **If circumstances allow, consider traveling or exploring new places.** Traveling can provide fresh perspectives and opportunities for meeting new people

16 **Be open to different types of friendships.** Sometimes, connections can form with people you might not have initially expected

17 **Be patient.** Don't be discouraged by setbacks or slow progress. Stay committed to building connections and improving your social life. Overcoming loneliness can take time.

In a world that's more interconnected than ever, it seems paradoxical that loneliness is on the rise.

Social media and digital communication have made it easier to connect with others, yet true and meaningful connections often elude us.

The impact of loneliness on both mental and physical wellbeing cannot be ignored.

The causes of loneliness are incredibly complex. The good news is that the complexity of the issue means there are a wide range of steps you can take to feel less lonely.

Exploring tips, tools and resources for handling loneliness can help you on your journey to feeling more connected. Why not put together your own "Combatting Loneliness Action Plan"?

“I’m tired
of feeling
judged.”

Charles,
Nickelback’s
number one fan.



SEE ME FOR ME
not my disability

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SOME PEOPLE ARE 'DISABLED'. OTHERS 'LIVE WITH' OR 'HAVE A DISABILITY'. HERE'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IDENTITY- FIRST AND PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

Darren Cunningham and Tricia Malowney prefer using different language and terminology when it comes to their disabilities. (ABC News: Patrick Stone) Darren Cunningham was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, a genetic condition also known as brittle bone disease.

The 51-year-old is a wheelchair user and estimates he has had somewhere between 80 to 100 bone fractures over the course of his life.

While some people may describe him as "living with disability", that's not how he sees himself. He identifies as a "disabled person".

The difference may sound subtle, but for Mr Cunningham and many others in the disability community, it's an important distinction.

"It's a way of making a statement about the fact that society in many ways is not accessible for me and the people like me — there are a lot of barriers around employment, housing and social opportunities," Mr Cunningham said.

"So when I identify proudly as a 'disabled person', I'm making a statement that until things improve and become more welcoming, I'm disabled."

Key points:

- Not everyone from the disability community likes being referred to as 'living with disability', despite that terminology becoming common in wider society
- *There's no universally 'right' or one-size-fits-all terminology that applies to everyone from the disability community*
- Language around disability is evolving and different people prefer to use it differently



Darren Cunningham identifies as a "disabled person". (ABC News: Patrick Stone)

For Tricia Malowney, it's different. She prefers to be known as a woman that "has a disability".

The 68-year-old has post-polio syndrome following a polio diagnosis in 1954 and she uses a caliper and crutches to aid her mobility.

Tricia Malowney identifies as someone that "has a disability". (ABC News: Patrick Stone)

Ms Malowney has spent decades as a disability advocate and received a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2018 for her work.

"The reason I don't use 'disabled woman' is because I'm not broken, I'm actually quite powerful," she said.

"It's also because ... when I was young, the term 'disabled woman' was a slur.

"Because of my age ... the term 'disabled' to me means switched off, almost like a lack of power, and I'm certainly not lacking in power."

'Disabled person' is identity-first language

The way Mr Cunningham identifies as a "disabled person", rather than someone who "lives with disability", is known as identity-first language.

Damian Mellifont, a research fellow at the University of Sydney's Centre for Disability Research and Policy, said many people who chose identity-first language saw their disability as a central part of who they were.

These people don't see themselves as "living with disability" because it's not something they carry "with" them or can put down at the end of the day like a bag or suitcase.

"It's key to their identity and not something to be hidden or ashamed of," Dr Mellifont said.

Mr Cunningham said some people in society were still hesitant to use the word "disabled" or "disability".

He said they were not dirty words, and phrases some people might substitute in such as "special needs" or "differently abled" made him feel "disconcerted".

"These phrases can be harmful to kids [who have disabilities] because they are actually being taught to deny a part of who they are, or feel shame about that part of themselves," he said.

Sydneysider Shamus Hart also prefers identity-first language and, as such, identifies as "autistic" rather than someone "that has autism".

"[Autism is] something that I cannot change about myself. It's the same way that I can't change the colour of my skin ... it's basically wired into who I am," the 42-year-old said.

"If I say that I 'have' autism then that implies that it's pathologised, and for me that just doesn't really feel right to my identity."



Shamus Hart says person-first language "doesn't really feel right" for him personally. *(ABC News: Billy Cooper)*
'Person with/that has a disability' is person-first language

Ms Malowney's preference to be known as a person "that has a disability" is known as person-first language. This phrasing resists overemphasis on the disability and aims to offset the dehumanisation of the disability community.

"[Those who] prefer person-first language ... don't want to be defined by their disability," Dr Mellifont said.

"For these people, disability remains a part of who they are but it isn't everything.

"They choose language which emphasises they are more than their disabilities [and] highlight that they are people first."

Tricia Malowney says disability is a big part of her life, but it's not everything. *(ABC News: Patrick Stone)*

Ms Malowney said she was proud of her disability.

"Disability impacts on my life, but it's something I'm actually quite proud of," she said.

"I'm happy to be who I am — and I think that sometimes gets forgotten in the mix."

Changing with the times

Person-first language has become common across wider society, but not necessarily within the disability community.

"Disabled", "disabled person", and other phrases previously used as slurs against the disability community are now being reclaimed by younger people, similar to how the LGBTQI+ community has taken back control of certain words.

"It's funny because we actually fought to stop being called 'disabled people' and now the tide has turned," Ms Malowney said of disability advocates from her generation.



So if you're unsure about a particular person's language preference, what do you do?

It's simple: Ask them.

"The bottom line is that there are many individuals who prefer person-first language, and many others who choose to use identity-first language — and this is fine," Dr Mellifont said.

"If someone freely chooses to use person-first language or identity-first language, that's their right to do so."

Shamus Hart says it's important to respect whatever language someone prefers. *(ABC News: Billy Cooper)*

Mr Hart said using someone's preferred language was a mark of respect.

"I know quite a few people who say that they're 'autistic'. Others say 'with autism'," he said.

"I tend to respect that because every person on the spectrum is slightly different."

Mr Cunningham said it was important to respect people's language preferences — "even if you're not comfortable with what they choose".

"It's about giving them ownership for their own journey," he said.

"What we want is a space where people get to self-identify in their disability, sexual identity, gender, culture or whatever it may be."

The ABC is partnering with [International Day of People with Disability](#) to celebrate the contributions and achievements of the 4.4 million Australians with disability.

BY THE ABC SPECIALIST REPORTING TEAM'S [EVAN YOUNG](#)

"But now it's [the younger generation's] fight ... so we pass it on to them, and language preferences may even come back around again."

Mr Cunningham said while he was a proud "disabled person" at the moment, that wasn't always his preferred terminology and it could change again in the years to come.

"Even if I don't change, the discussion around how other people might change the way they talk about themselves will — and it will be great to be part of that," he said.
"Listening and learning are really important."

A mark of respect

The reasons people from the disability community use the language they do can come down to a range of factors.

Someone's preference can be affected by their relationship with their disability, the type of disability, when it was acquired and which country they live in.

Language around disability is constantly evolving, and the way people identify with it are diverse and individualised, Dr Mellifont said.

Some people often have a preference for certain terms, while others don't mind or use multiple.

According to a survey by US researchers of 519 people from 23 countries published this year, 49 per cent of respondents preferred identity-first language, 33 per cent favoured person-first language, and 18 per cent had no preference.

As such, there's no "right", one-size-fits-all terminology applicable to everyone.





FOOD.FASHION. FRIENDS & TRENDS

*Introducing our new addition to
Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine - Destination Wellness*

Hi I'm Laura...

Each edition Laura will share something new with you that falls in line with the title above. You will be able to read our latest news and offers regarding the services and products we have reviewed, or from our advertisers. We give you exclusive access to our latest collections, services, and limited offers, plus a chance to WIN gifts from one of our amazing sponsors. If you would like to get involved please let us know.



What are our HOT TOPICS this edition?

YOUTUBE sensation Dr Mike M.D and his dog Bear

Music for the soul from Lady GaGa

A New Release from Netflix to watch and enjoy



FOOD



FASHION



FRIENDS



& TRENDS

Laura's # Top Three Topics

#1 - MEET DR MIKE M.D

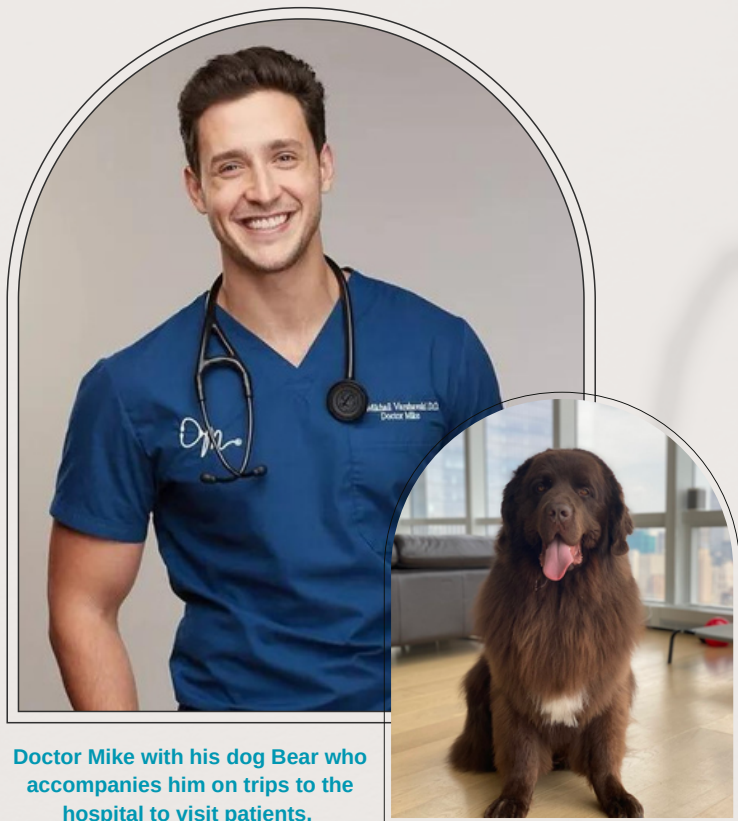
Dr. Mike Varshavski is an actively practicing Board Certified Family Medicine doctor. #1 Health & Lifestyle expert (USA). Doctor Mike is a regular contributor to esteemed publications including Women's Health, Men's Health, Reader's Digest, American Academy of Family Physicians Blog, and MedPage Today.

He has further established himself in the field of digital healthcare & medicine, presenting seminars and lectures for the TEDx Conference, Mayo Clinic, and many more.

Doctor Mike is one of the most influential medical educators of the digital era.

Welcome to the land of entertaining, reliable, evidence-based medical information! If there's any health topic you are curious about go ahead and search it! We are a community of humans who love learning about health and having a great time! This year is gonna be packed with new content, new series, and most importantly new laughs!

[The Checkup with Doctor Mike](#)
[YouTube](#) - [Podcasts](#) - [Spotify](#)



Doctor Mike with his dog Bear who accompanies him on trips to the hospital to visit patients.

Self Care Takes Many Forms



#2 - Music: Lady GaGa
Always Remember Us This Way



#3 - Relax with a movie Netflix
"Feel the Beat"

From the movie "A Star is Born" which debuted the incredibly talented singer, song-writer and now actress Lady GaGa. She stars alongside Bradley Cooper in this emotionally charged and beautiful film. The soundtrack was a best seller and has many number one hits to listen to. This one is my favourite. Find it on YouTube.

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This delightful movie is full of unexpected appreciation. The direction, script, acting, music, cinematography, everything did justice to the title. It is about a highly challenging dance-trainer who falls from grace at her big audition and has to return home. The local kids dance studio leader appeals to our heroine April, who aspires to become a great dancer, to teach a very mixed bag of quirky kids. For me the take home's were the way April makes a difference in these young girls lives through dance, while transforming her own. A great laugh, warm moments to cherish, highly recommended girls night in movie.

Gabrielle Worthington

Gill McGimpsey-Evans



Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine - professional printing & postage is proudly supported through the generosity of our incredible long-term sponsor Gabrielle Worthington, Managing Director Dependable Laundry Solutions.

Chronically Inspired - Life.Beyond.Disability, and Honeybee Lifestyle Magazine are proudly supported through the generosity of our beloved member and friend Gill, who passed away in 2021 from Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension.



DEPENDABLE
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TESTIMONIAL from our sponsor..

As a Sponsor of Chronically Inspired - Life.Beyond.Disability we are very proud to support Founder Melissa Dumitru in her endeavours to provide an excellent resource for people living with chronic illness, disability, & mental health conditions. The HoneyBee Lifestyle Magazine would have to be one of the most helpful, informative magazines that absolutely inspires those with health challenges to live their best life. Melissa speaks and informs from a lived experience... a very powerful insight into individuals suffering chronic diseases... a fantastic read for sufferers and their Partners, Friends, Supporters alike. One day, this fabulous magazine will be in all sorts of Medical Practitioners offices as a little Life Saver for those afflicted in so many ways.

Acknowledgement to Country: Chronically Inspired would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their culture, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and are committed to making a positive contribution to the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, by working on providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate and inclusive. We are committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. We welcome all people irrespective of ethnicity, lifestyle choice, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity.

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Hello my lovelies

Last words



from the Divine Ms. M



People do not buy
goods and services.
They buy relations,
stories and magic.

Its been a very challenging year for me since my big heart scare in December last year, I haven't adjusted to my new medications and the side effects have robbed me of my quality of life. **A friend referred to 2023 "as the year that went sideways", I couldn't agree more...**

Covid was brutal and left me with lingering effects that are hard to deal with. I consider myself lucky to have survived - given how many people haven't, including my own mother. I haven't faced this many health challenges in years and to be honest, there were times when I felt like giving up, or didn't think I would survive.

Having always been a woman with enormous drive and enthusiasm. I haven't recognised myself for months, wondering where have I gone and am I ever coming back!

I think this is one of the reasons I was drawn to our magazine topic this edition, See ME not my DISABILITY, it's a tricky one isn't it? Even those of us living with our disabilities and chronic conditions are trying to figure out the right terminology used for individual groups.

As we make our way through life it's important that we try to be kind, project self love and have self compassion. Lord knows with the world the way it is at the moment, we could do with all the love we can get!



I would like to acknowledge the passing of my mother, June Violettis who died of Covid in early June this year, two days before her 87th birthday.

It was so sudden and so unexpected that it has left us reeling. I was reminded of how fragile we can be, and how hard we cling to life...



My mother was a bit of an enigma who really belonged on the stage. She started out life as an opera singer and could have gone on to great fame. She was very eccentric and pretty high maintenance to be honest! My sister and I and our husbands cared for her right up until her last days.

Mum is now resting in peace with our dad. We are grateful for all she did for us through our lives. RIP darling mummy.



I hope you have enjoyed this edition prepared for you with so much love from our Honeybee team. Take care and we look forward to catching up with you again in a few months time.

Love + blessings always. Melissa x





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- Community resources:Resources: : [Starting a community garden - CGA](#)
- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>
- <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com>

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- Canva Pro, Google Images, Unsplash, Pinterest, google definition searches,
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Our Vision

Chronically Inspired envisions a community where individuals, with chronic illnesses, mental health issues & disabilities both physical and intellectual, are accepted into our society exactly as they are. Recognised as having the same qualities, talents, flaws, and challenges as anyone else. And given the same advantages and privilege without exception.



Our Mission

Chronically Inspired exists to reinforce the purity of one message: the lived experience and patient expert stories. We empower through inspiring storytelling, informative content, and supportive collaboration of the unique journeys and lived experiences from our collaborators, and through our networking to highlight the incredible lives so many in our community are living despite their many challenges.