



AUTUMN 2019

mind View

Me and my OT



Occupational therapy is making a world of difference for Fred.

When Fred qualified for a functional assessment with an NDIS registered occupational therapist, he didn't have to look far to find one.

There was an occupational therapist right under Fred's roof, at the Mind supported independent living units Fred has called home for the past three years.

As the name suggests, his supported independent living residence is a place for people to live in the community while getting the support they need to build their skills for independence.

Fred has been diagnosed with schizophrenia. His occupational therapist is Daniel Luhrs. Before qualifying as an occupational

therapist Daniel was already working at Fred's residence as a support worker and so they knew each other pretty well.

Fred's functional assessment was an opportunity to formally assess everything Fred can and can't do to live independently and to look at what would help him to become more independent and to live a more engaged and fulfilling life.

Once the assessment was completed, Daniel created a report that makes recommendations to the NDIS for Fred's funded plan. This determines all the areas in which the NDIS will fund support.

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Dear friend,

This issue of *Mind View* looks at some of the new kinds of support services Mind is providing around Australia. Helping more people is one of our key strategic goals and we need to be responsive to new opportunities and new ways to provide support where it is needed, in the changing funding landscape for mental health reform in Australia.

Building on our strong track record of forging successful partnerships – a key strength of our organisation – has been central to how we have responded to this challenge. This issue looks at our collaboration with the Transport Accident Commission, and the difference our outreach and support coordination workers are making for people dealing with the trauma following a road accident.

You can also read about the team we created for the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (PHN) to provide multidisciplinary support services, including family liaison, to people in Melbourne’s outer south-east. The team is achieving some wonderful outcomes for people who are in very challenging circumstances.

Mind has recently become an authorised allied health provider with

the NDIS, which increases our ability to provide people with more of the supports they need within the one setting. As with Fred’s story in this issue, this often means people can get occupational therapy and other allied health supports by Mind staff with whom they are already familiar and comfortable. Another benefit is that it allows us to more fully embrace the diversity of skills and training of wonderful team members like Daniel (see our cover story).

2019 has started in a very positive fashion for us at Mind as we have been the successful tenderer for a series of new services around Australia. These include four new early intervention mobile support services in regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne and two new, greatly needed Step Up Step Down services for young people in Brisbane. See page 10 for more details.

I am proud to hear from tendering bodies that the strength of our practice governance has been integral in our success in tendering for new services. I am confident of announcing more successful tenders in coming issues of *Mind View*.

Another important focus for us this year is the advocacy opportunities provided by the Victorian Royal

Commission and the federal government’s Mental Health Productivity Commission. Our submission for the Terms of Reference of the Victorian Royal Commission focused on the need for a human rights informed approach to cover the myriad social determinants of mental health, and the importance of ensuring the participation of people with lived experience in all stages of the Royal Commission. It also addressed systemic issues in the current mental health system and the important role played in it by the community managed sector.

Our submission to the Mental Health Productivity Commission will focus on the difficulties faced by the paid mental health workforce and unpaid informal carers and will advocate for an expanded peer workforce in mental health. I look forward to sharing more details of the progress of these important reviews in the months to come.

Warm regards,

Robyn Hunter
Chief Executive Officer



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Fred has sustained a serious injury, which limits the use of one of his hands, so the assessment included looking at how this impacts his daily life and how this can be overcome.

“We assessed how his hand injury impacted on his general capacity and assessed how we can improve his motivation and general psychological health,” Daniel says.

This year, education will be a major focus of Fred’s plan.

“We are always creating goals with the long term aspiration to live as independently as possible. This year Fred has enrolled to finish his VCE Maths and that will be his big challenge this year.”

The occupational therapist’s recommendations are provided to Fred’s key workers so they can best support him to reach his goals. His plan includes outreach

support, which means he can go fishing – one of his passions – with his outreach worker every fortnight.

“Fred had never cooked for himself before so that was something we worked on too,” Daniel says.

He has helped Fred learn how to cook safely, factoring in his limited use of his right hand and Fred is now the master of the chicken noodle stir fry.

“I love chicken noodle stir fry!” Fred says. “I went out last week and bought all the ingredients and went and cooked it for my Mum.”

Fred has plenty of projects and activities to keep him busy and he is enjoying his life in supported independent living.

“Fred is doing really well here – he has stable friendships and we are working on

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“I hope I help other people by telling my story.”

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reducing the frequency of him experiencing negative mental health symptoms,” Daniel says. “The report has allowed us to advocate on Fred’s behalf for therapy with a psychologist, which will help him manage his psychosocial challenges, and Fred has identified that he would like this support, which really is the most important thing.”

“I love living here,” Fred says. “The people are really nice and friendly, it is a good environment. I hope I help other people by telling my story.” ■

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“Fred has enrolled to finish his VCE Maths and that will be his big challenge this year.”

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Mind's roving allied health team

Daniel is a member of Mind's roving allied health team

Mind has created a new roving allied health team to provide occupational therapy and psychological support to people with dual disability and complex needs.

The mobile team work with our frontline staff at our day and residential services across Melbourne and regional Victoria, but can also visit people in the comfort of their own home. This ensures they can reach customers who may not otherwise be able to access support.

“When we decided to establish an allied health team, we consulted widely to identify what services people most needed,” Sylvia Tran of our business development team explains. “That feedback told us it was occupational therapists and psychologists. As the need for different supports arises, Mind will add other allied health services to the team.”

Delivering higher level support

Mind is one of the few organisations delivering higher support, including Positive Behaviour Support planning.

“When a customer requires a Positive Behaviour Support plan, being able to offer both an occupational therapist and a psychologist on our team means we can develop a more informed assessment of the person’s behaviours and devise a more holistic behavioural plan,” Sylvia explains.

“Our team is able to complete specialist assessments and reports for the purpose of informing NDIS support needs, functional assessments, home modification assessments, eligibility for Supported Independent Living or Special Disability Accommodation, Positive Behaviour Support plans, counselling, and customised intervention support.”

The allied health team also partners collaboratively with service providers from other clinical and non-clinical services to ensure the best outcomes for the person.

Quality assurance

Mind and its practitioners are registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and have met the relevant quality, safeguards and compliance obligations as stipulated in the NDIS National Quality and Safeguards Frameworks, as well as existing Commonwealth, State and Territory standards and legislation.

Mind continues to undergo third-party auditing and the comprehensive process of certification to ensure we have appropriate practitioners to be able to provide complex service support. Under the NDIS, this includes practitioners who are competent in behaviour support planning and specialist support coordination.

*If you wish to make a referral or enquiry about Mind’s allied health supports, you can do this by calling **Mind Connect on 1300 286 463** or emailing us at **mindconnect@mindaustralia.org.au***

What is allied health?

Allied health professionals are health professionals that are university-qualified practitioners with specialised expertise in preventing, diagnosing and treating a range of conditions and illnesses. Allied health practitioners often work within a multidisciplinary health team to provide specialised support for different patient needs.

Allied health practitioners include psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, music therapists, social workers, chiropractors and speech pathologists.

Being mobile ensures our allied health practitioners can reach customers who may not otherwise be able to access support.

What does an occupational therapist do?

An occupational therapist is someone who helps customers interact and engage in everyday life including activities of self-care, productivity (purpose activities for self-development), leisure, and rest. Occupational therapists from our allied health team provide services including

- functional assessments
- assistive technology assessments
- home modification assessments
- therapeutic support to helping people develop skills to live more independently
- Positive Behaviour Support plans
- training for families and carers
- assessment of personal support needs (personal care)
- housing assessments for participants requiring Specialist Disability Accommodation.

People can access occupational therapist support through their NDIS plan if they have the following items: *Improved Daily Living or Improved Relationships.*

What does a psychologist do?

A psychologist is a practitioner who uses evidence-based methods to study the factors that influence human behaviour and applies a range of psychological therapies and interventions to assist a person to manage their mental health issues.

Within a psychological assessment the practitioner will formulate recommendations for the person's support based on history presented, assessment conducted, and interpretation of results including cognitive abilities, social emotional assessment, and adaptive or maladaptive skills. If the customer chooses, Mind's psychologist can also offer ongoing support to the care team. Mind's psychologists offer:

- counselling
- therapeutic support
- assessments
- Positive Behaviour Support plans
- training for families and carers. ■

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“Being able to offer both an occupational therapist and a psychologist on our treating team means we can... devise a more holistic behavioural plan.”

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Integrating family support and mental health services in Dandenong

Mind has established an interdisciplinary team of family liaison workers, case managers and mental health nurses to provide an integrated approach for people with complex mental health challenges in the City of Greater Dandenong.

This large and vibrant multicultural area in the outer south-east of Melbourne has a high number of people whose mental health challenges cannot be improved without addressing other challenges they face, including family relationships, poor social connection, employment and housing difficulties, and legal and financial concerns.

“The vision for this program is to provide a team of workers with the flexibility to address the different factors that can impact on the mental health of clients

with complex support needs,” says the program’s Service Manager Mark Buljat.

The program (formally known as Mental Health Integrated Complex Care (MHICC)) provides flexible support that is tailored to each individual’s needs, including:

- clinical nursing
- care coordination for clinical and non-clinical (psychosocial) services
- family support liaison

Mind is delivering the program as part of the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network’s model of care for clients who don’t have NDIS plans.

- support to access psychiatric and psychological care.

Mind is delivering the program as part of the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network’s model of care for clients who don’t have NDIS plans. The model’s aim is to help people overcome the barriers to navigating the mental health system and access appropriate support. Its goal is to level the playing field when it comes to mental health services and give everyone a chance for better health and a meaningful life.

People prioritised for support by the Primary Health Networks include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing homelessness, people at risk of suicide, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with substance use disorders and people who have experienced family violence.

How we supported Ratiq

Ratiq* (name changed) was referred by his doctor to the service for assistance with anger management issues. His wife had taken an Apprehended Violence Order out against him, he was living in a friend's garage, his mental health had deteriorated, and he was experiencing depression. His case manager (from another agency) was concerned that Ratiq was not complying with the language and work requirements of his visa and that he would lose it and be unable to remain in Australia. Ratiq spoke no English.

Seeing Ratiq once a week with an interpreter, the team is improving his situation in the following ways:

- liaising and advocating with Ratiq's GP for a prescription of antidepressants suggested by his psychologist
- advocating Ratiq's concerns about upcoming court cases to his Legal Aid team

- having a team member and interpreter accompany Ratiq to his court hearings
- writing updates on Ratiq's progress to the court
- supporting Ratiq to meet all court requirements including connecting to a psychologist and attending English classes and a father support group
- accompanying Ratiq to his appointments with the psychologist and assisting him to best utilise the psychologists suggestions about how to improve his reactions to family stresses.

Currently Ratiq is feeling much happier, as the court has allowed him to return home and the Apprehended Violence Order has been lifted (with conditions). Ratiq's wife came to thank us for helping him and reported he is much better able to deal with the stresses of being home with his large family (seven children, one wife, one son-in-law and two grandchildren).

Ratiq reports his mood has greatly improved because of the anti-depressants. His English has improved dramatically and he is able to converse quite well with team members. He has made connections with people from his country of origin and is looking forward to doing some work for them. After one final session with Ratiq's psychologist, the team is planning to step him down from this program to one for clients with less complex issues. ■

Ratiq's wife came to thank us for helping him and reported he is much better able to deal with the stresses of being home with his large family.

"We work well together as a team," says MHICC Care Coordinator Margi Jelovcic. "As clients see the results, their anxiety eases and a new hope is encouraged which helps them continue their recovery."

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"As clients see the results, their anxiety eases and a new hope is encouraged which helps them continue their recovery."

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The program's Family Liaison worker Vicky Horn has seen first-hand the value of being part of a team that can help clients with the different factors that have an impact on their health and their relationships.

"There are many different issues which overlap when a person has a mental illness. When we assist with accommodation, for example, it often means that family relationships improve."

"Problems with relationships and family are usually a big underlying factor in mental illness," she adds. "With our support, clients can work on improving the way they relate to friends and families. It is usually a big relief for families to have someone that can give them some understanding of why their loved one is behaving in a way that is difficult to understand."

"The source of a client's stress may equally come from other members of their family or their living environment, so being able to negotiate those challenges can often lead to improved wellbeing for all concerned."

Vicky says it is encouraging to see a common pattern of improvement with clients. "Many will be calling us in distress three to four times a week in the early days and there is a real loss of hope for a better life. But after three to six months we see clients becoming more aware of their own strengths and recognising their own courage in dealing with the burdens and challenges of living with mental ill-health. It's very gratifying." ■





From TAC to Mind; the road to recovery

Physical injuries are the most obvious traumatic result of a road accident, but the mental health consequences can be equally traumatic.

Post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression, lost employment and housing, dependency on prescription drugs, relationship breakdowns and loss of connection to the community can sometimes follow serious bodily injuries or an acquired brain injury.

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“With our support, people can regain their independence, reconnect with the community and engage in meaningful activities.”

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The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) has been engaging Mind’s expertise in psychosocial outreach services and case management across Victoria for the past two years.

TAC refers clients whose injuries have resulted in them having complex needs to Mind for an individual trauma-informed assessment, which Mind then uses to develop a tailored recovery plan.

This plan identifies the goals that the customer wants to achieve and Mind then works closely with them, their support network and the TAC to deliver these and help them achieve a better life.

“We support clients across the gamut of issues that result from a road accident,” says Mind Centre Manager Tom Wintzloff. “Every TAC customer’s needs will be very different, but their individual recovery plans may include things like fitness and lifestyle plans, and their case management and outreach support might be anything from help to find suitable housing, help with Centrelink, supporting the client to go to medical appointments, or connecting them

with an appropriate general practitioner for their needs.”

“Mind workers really enjoy being able to work with TAC clients because we have the flexibility to adapt the services we provide to meet the specific needs of the client and produce really positive outcomes. We can identify and supplement the gaps in their existing services or develop a plan from scratch.”

“With our support, people can regain their independence, reconnect with the community and engage in meaningful activities.”

Mind is currently working in partnership with the TAC to widen its scope of work to include other services that will ensure systemic wrap around care.

For more information about Mind’s psychosocial outreach services and case management services call **Mind Connect on 1300 286 463.** ■

How we supported William

When William had a traffic accident in 2015, he literally didn't know what hit him.

"All I remember is that I was crossing the road," he says. Witnesses told police the impact threw William into the air and he landed hard on the left side of his body and head. William sustained damage to his knee and shoulder and bruising on the brain. He had no broken bones and was released from hospital shortly afterwards in a neck brace and still very confused about what had happened.

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"The accident was a bit of a catalyst and my life took a turn for the worse."

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"The accident was a bit of a catalyst and my life took a turn for the worse after that. I was really struggling. I wasn't working; I started drinking heavily and became very depressed and anxious," he says.

William's relationship of 12 years came to an end as a result and William went to

a residential rehabilitation centre to stop drinking. He successfully stopped drinking for 15 months after being discharged but relapsed after moving into a challenging housing situation, became isolated and withdrawn and says he was having bad, negative thoughts.

"I knew what I had to do, which was get back into the rehab service to manage my drinking, but I was just waiting for a spot at the centre to come up."

His TAC case worker referred him to Mind for outreach support and case management.

"Johnny, my first Mind support worker, was great. We'd just go for a walk and talk. He wouldn't try and tell me what to do, he would just listen, offer suggestions and be that friendly face who would get me away from that bad home situation."

Johnny facilitated getting William out of that the accommodation service and back into the alcohol rehabilitation service. After completing his detox, William moved into an 'abstinent house' run by Oxford Housing. "An Binh (William's new Mind outreach support) really motivated me to go to Centrelink and make sure I was signed up – he even came with me.

William is doing better than he has since the accident three years ago. "I'm

not on medication any more – off the antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications, which is great. I go to the gym a few times a week and smash out some cardio – it really lifts my mood."

An Binh helped William arrange with Centrelink for time to become work ready and will support him when he starts job-hunting in April, connecting him with job agencies and helping his with his resume.

William and An Binh catch up once a week. "It doesn't sound much, but week after week it adds up and it's so helpful," William says. "He come and picks me up and takes me to the rehab centre for my (voluntary alcohol) screening or we'll go for a coffee and a chat somewhere. I'm a lot happier and more active and doing the things you need to do to stay well." ■

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"I'm not on medication any more – off the antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications, which is great."

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Mind outreach staff help people at home and in the community.

In brief

Mind to deliver mobile outreach in Victoria

Melbourne's western suburbs, inner eastern suburbs and the Albury Wodonga region will each have the services of a new mobile team of specialised Mind outreach workers. With their own car and laptop, members of the new teams will deliver one-to-one outreach support to people with severe mental ill-health as well as group work out of Mind centres or community services centres.

Mind has successfully tendered to deliver these newly created Early Intervention Psychosocial Support Response services for Melbourne Health, St Vincents Hospital and Albury Wodonga Health.

The services will provide specialist support for up to 12 months, for adults 16-65 living with severe mental ill-health. It is designed for people who are not currently eligible for the NDIS because they don't have significant, permanent functional impairment associated with their mental health condition. It will also support people who are eligible for the NDIS but are waiting for an access decision and their NDIS plan to begin.



They will help people build their capacity to better manage their mental ill-health and to develop practical life skills for independent living and improved social connectedness and quality of life.

The services are expected to become operational over autumn and winter. For more information call Mind Connect on 1300 286 463.

Mind to manage new youth services in Brisbane

Mind has successfully tendered to manage two new, purpose built residential services in Brisbane to support recovery for young people (16-21 years) with mental ill-health.

We will work in partnership with Queensland Health Metro North and Metro South

Hospital and Health Services to coordinate and deliver voluntary, non-clinical, recovery oriented mental health services at two 'Step Up Step Down' services from late 2019.

Step Up Step Down (SUSD) services provide residential support for up to 28 days that

focuses on building people's individual strengths and resilience, enhancing their opportunities for social inclusion and working collaboratively with them, their families, carers and significant others.

Youth SUSD's reduce the likelihood of admission to an acute mental health inpatient unit by preventing further deterioration of a young person's mental state and associated disability (step up). They also enable early discharge from acute mental health inpatient units by providing the alternative of an intensive, safe and supportive residential community program (step down).

Mind's non-clinical support staff will work alongside the clinical support provided by Health and Hospital Service staff.



Pilot program targets LGBTIQ suicide

The Mind Equality Centre, Mind's LGBTIQ counselling and therapies service, is leading a pilot program designed to reduce suicide in the LGBTIQ community. Rates of attempted suicide are still significantly higher among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Australia, a fact commonly attributed to the impacts of persisting negative religious and cultural attitudes to sexual and gender variance.

The program will provide targeted follow up care for people who have either attempted suicide or expressed ideas of suicide to workers in hospital Emergency Departments, CATT teams or similar.

Funded by the North Western Primary Health Network, this aftercare model follows research indicated that coordinated support following a suicide attempt could reduce the occurrence of further attempts by almost 20 per cent.

The project will be staffed by a clinical psychologist and two LGBTIQ identified, qualified peer workers. They will undertake an assessment of referred clients, then develop a tailored support plan, engage with family and other networks where appropriate and link in with other services as required.

The 18 month pilot program is a partnership with Thorne Harbour Health and Youth Support and Advocacy Service. It will become active in coming months after community consultation is completed to ensure it meets community needs.

For information about how your service can refer people to this program or for more information about the Mind Equality Centre's counselling services, call 1300 054 284.



Julian and JIM

We say farewell but not goodbye to Julian Gardner AM. While summer saw the departure of our esteemed Mind Board Chair of seven years, autumn sees his welcome appointment as Patron of Justice In Mind (JIM), our program supporting clients to access legal justice. Julian will lead efforts to achieve larger systemic legal reforms in areas impacting people with mental ill-health.

Mind Equality Centre offers counselling by video



People who want counselling from an LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer) friendly therapist but can't get to the Mind Equality Centre in Fitzroy North now have the option of counselling via video link.

Video counselling is an online service that enables face-to-face therapy using a video link.

This will be especially helpful for people who live too far away to visit the centre and people who have mobility issues.

"LGBTIQ-identifying people in regional areas are more at risk of isolation, so we

are thrilled to be able to provide the option of video counselling," says Mind's Senior Manager LGBTIQ Service Development, Meaghan Holden.

Mind's new allied health team (see p4) is also offering access to occupational therapy and psychotherapy via video conferencing.

For more information about LGBTIQ video counselling, please call the Mind Equality Centre on 1300 054 284 or for information about video access to allied health services call Mind Connect on 1300 286 463.

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