



Merri Health
Healthcare that moves with you

MerriNews

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 Merri-Health

 @MerriHealth

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Welcome.

A message from Chief Executive Officer, Tassia Michaleas

I hope you all keeping well and enjoying some relaxed restrictions in Victoria as we continue to fight to stay on top of the virus.

To help keep our community safe and assist with contact tracing, you will notice a visitor check-in poster next time you go to one of our sites. These posters have a QR code to check you in and to ensure you are contacted if there is ever a positive case at the site.

If you are unsure how to check-in, please ask one of our friendly reception staff.

We are delighted that Merri Health has been named Employer of Choice for Gender Equality by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency once again! We are one of only six organisations in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry to achieve this recognition in 2019-21.

Creating a workplace in which all people are equally represented, valued and rewarded requires leadership, accountability and a focus on gender equality as a strategic priority. I am proud of our commitment to gender pay equity, zero tolerance of gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying.

That said, there is still work for us to do.

We will continue to strive to make Merri Health a supportive, safe workplace that provides equal opportunity and reward for people of all genders.

Can you believe it has been 12 months since most of us began working from home?

It has been a challenging year and for most of us, working from home has brought both advantages and disadvantages.

To commemorate the anniversary of working from home, we asked community and our staff to weigh in on what the past 12 months at home has been like for them. Read the responses via the link below.

As we crawl into the winter months I urge everyone to take care, stay safe and if feeling unwell stay home and get tested.



 <https://bit.ly/3njaueh>

Working together to support children's learning and development in early education



This month, we are delighted to launch Kinder Partnerships, a new Merri Health service which provides allied health support for early childhood educators and teachers to enhance children's learning before they start school.

Kinder Partnerships provides childcare centres and kindergartens with a 'menu' of allied health professional services they can select to support their role.

We can help with:

- Self-regulation and emotional skills
- Self-care and organisation skills
- Motor skills
- Play and social skills
- Communication skills
- School readiness

We can also support you by providing:

- Professional development with a psychologist, speech pathologist and other allied health professionals
- Development through workshops, presentations and case discussions
- Observation and coaching sessions within the early childhood settings
- Family workshops, handouts and resource development
- Referral pathway information
- Support with having challenging conversations with families

Find out more



<https://bit.ly/32WBV3X>

Hurrah for our HRAR team!



When COVID-19 broke out in Melbourne's North, the Government turned to Merri Health and other critical community organisations to help prevent the spread in public housing and other high-risk accommodation with shared facilities.

As part of the HRAR Moreland initiative, Merri's team supported residents, public housing landlords and managers at 161 properties, including: rooming houses, low rise public housing, high rise public housing, community housing and supported residential services.

The team used different approaches, adapted to the needs of community, to keep thousands of tenants safe.

Following the success of this work in 2020 and early 2021, HRAR funding has been extended until June 2021.

Read more.



<https://bit.ly/3wNcOyt>

Prep kids pass on their expert advice



Ready, Set, Prep! works with community members, primary schools and early years providers to support early learning, family engagement and transition to primary school. When services and families work together, children are supported to have a smooth transition to primary school.

Hear from local children as they offer their advice about beginning Prep to those who are about to start.

Hear also from soon-to-be Preps as they say what they are looking forward to!

Part one:



<https://bit.ly/2OvHFOK>

Part two:



<https://bit.ly/3t9f1Sk>



Look up, grow your social skills, be brave!

Social connection is vital for health and wellbeing. This year, we partnered with local community members to launch a Community Connection Challenge as part of our BeMerri Festival. As we come out of COVID-19 restrictions, we invite you to take up this challenge written by community member Zavi and boost your wellbeing!

Today, I challenge you to learn some positive skills to help you glide through any awkward situation with ease – and use them in your community!

Here is my story: A couple of years ago I learnt about the importance of social skills after speaking with my kids' doctor about their shyness.

The doctor said: "Your boys need a social skills group" and I was like "A what...?!". Apparently, there are people who enter a room and are comfortable with any topic of discussion. While some may be born with this quality, many simply can't do that.

There are moments we all need help to break our self-made barriers and show our unique selves and talents to the world around us.

When I got home from the doctor I went down a rabbit hole determined to find a 'social skills group. And wow! It took a while, but I did and this is what I've learnt:

- Meet someone with a gentle smile and greet them
- Read the room and make eye contact

- Take a comfortable listening position and stay focused on the topic
- Practice flexible thinking 'to go with the flow'
- Show sympathy and empathy
- Control over-emotions
- Practice positive self-talk
- Develop calming down strategies (for when you get nervous)
- Discover your own polite way to say "No"

Your challenge:

- Give yourself one star if you successfully say hello to five strangers
- Give yourself two stars if after successful exchange of hello you are able to ask "how are you?" to a couple of people
- Become your community ROCKSTAR (three stars) by adding another comment [could be about weather, the surroundings etc.] to one person

How many stars can you collect this week?

Wisdom and Resilience videos



On International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in December, we invited the community to share in this Women's Community Café, celebrating the wisdom and resilience of older women.

Proudly brought to you by Merri Health and the Elder Abuse Prevention Networks North and West, this cafe conversation highlight the value of older people and helps combat

ageism in our communities.

The recorded conversation is divided into the following four-part series -

- Part 1 'Ageism in a time of pandemic' - Dr Marlene Krasovitsky, Director, Every Age Counts
- Part 2 'Meaning and purpose in later life' - Ilsa Hampton is the CEO of Meaningful

- Part 3 'Grief and loss during COVID-19' - Jacqueline Taylor, Carer-Counselling, Merri Carer Services
- Part 4 'Mental health through story' featuring Caroline Sarah, 'The Story Costumer'

Watch now



<https://bit.ly/31Rp6HF>

Spot the balloons and support rainbow health!

Merri Health is a proud Rainbow Tick accredited organisation and, to show our support for LGBTIQ+ communities, Merri is taking part in the Midsumma Festival this April with a virtual stall and 'selfie' window display, and walking in the Pride March this May.

Merri recognises that people who identify LGBTIQ+ experience poorer mental health and higher rates of suicide than the broader community. They are also at higher risk of some health

conditions and may not access support or services due to fear of discrimination [LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, 2021].

Take a photo of you pretending to hold the balloons and post to social media with the hashtag #RainbowHealthMatters.

Find out more



merrihealth.org.au/ally



Photo: Marketing and Communications Advisor, Dan, trialling the Carer Cam
*See next page.



New camera technology to capture on the ground carer experiences

We're proud to share the stories of those carers who have found support and assistance through Carer Gateway's face to face, over the phone and online offerings. It's important these insights into how Carer Gateway has benefited carers are shared. By doing so, other carers who may not be aware of the help that is available, or believe they are not entitled to support, can identify with the lived experience of other carers and seek out assistance.

While Carer Gateway does travel the country speaking with carers, there can be barriers for a carer to sit down to an interview. Time limitations, location, health concerns or any other factors can sometimes be overcome by having a carer self-tape their own interview. Carer

Carer Cam is a new project being used to ensure all carers have the opportunity to voice their support of Carer Gateway. A small, easy to use stabilised video camera [DJI Osmo Pocket 2] will be distributed to participating carers to allow them to share their thoughts and footage of their daily experience of being a carer, without having to speak in front of a camera crew.

If you are registered with Carer Gateway and would like to be involved, please email Marketing and Communications Advisor, Dan Walls



Dan.Walls@merrrihealth.org.au

One-on-one coaching for carers

The Facilitated Coaching Service is one component of the Carer Gateway and is due to be rolled out across Australia in July 2021.

The Facilitated Coaching Service provides one-on-one coaching to empower carers to increase their confidence, skills and wellbeing. Coaching aims to support carers to learn skills to assist them in their caring role, identify needs and goals, and provide them with support and resources on a wide range of issues related to their caring role.

Facilitated Coaching is non-therapeutic and is not designed

as a crisis intervention. Some carers may be more suited to counselling or In-Person Peer Support services or may benefit from a combination of services.

Self-Guided Coaching is currently available to carers on the Carer Gateway website via the link below.



<https://bit.ly/33kvr0l>

Carer Gateway celebrates one year

It's been just over a year since we launched Carer Gateway in Victoria to provide services and support for Victoria's 736,000+ unpaid carers.

These everyday heroes care for someone who needs extra help due to disability, age, mental illness, or long-term physical illness.

Getting help early can make a big difference to a carer's life. It can help reduce emotional or physical strain, support carers to stay in work or study, and ultimately improve their quality of life.

Carer Gateway connects thousands of carers to services and supports including counselling, respite care, skills courses, targeted financial packages and much more.

Merri Health is proud to lead a group of six local health organisations including Alfred Health, Ballarat Health Services, Barwon Health, Bendigo Health Care Group, FamilyCare, and Uniting [Victoria and Tasmania] Ltd to deliver Carer Gateway services in Victoria.

Together, we have done some terrific work in our first year.

Launching during COVID has brought additional challenges, and we are working hard to increase understanding about who carers are, what they do, and what support is available.



CarerGateway@merrrihealth.org.au



How have we been partnering with our community?

Community engagement is at the heart of Merri Health.

Learning about our clients' experiences and gaining consumer suggestions helps us improve our services and shapes how we do things.

While COVID-19 prevented many of our scheduled activities, Merri Health actively undertook 115 engagement activities with consumers between October-December

2020, only a slight drop from 114 the previous quarter.

Read some examples of how we successfully included the community in decisions on our services and initiatives.



<https://bit.ly/3dOpq0M>

To receive this newsletter electronically or to update your details, email communications@merrihealth.org.au

Quick contacts

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1300 362 739

Brunswick

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Brunswick VIC 3056

Brunswick West

382–386 Moreland
Road Brunswick West
VIC 3055

Coburg

93 Bell Street
Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

21 Victoria Street
Coburg VIC 3058

Coburg

Ground floor,
19 Pentridge Blvd
Coburg VIC 3058

Craigieburn

120 Hothlyn Drive
Craigieburn VIC
3064

Fawkner

79 Jukes Road
Fawkner VIC 3060

Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street
Glenroy VIC 3046

Preston

Ground floor, Suites
3-4, 306-308 Bell Street
Preston VIC 3072

Preston

Level 1 and 2,
110 Chifley Drive Preston
VIC 3072

Wangaratta

Level 3, 62-68 Ovens
Street Wangaratta
VIC 3677

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