

All the latest info from Self Help Queensland

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#### Support 4 Support Groups!

Self Help Queensland supports people to find their own solutions to improve wellbeing. We connect people to support groups across a broad range of health issues, assist people to start new groups and work with support groups to build their capacity. SHQ promotes community awareness of the benefits of self help groups for the wellbeing of individuals coping with adverse life circumstances.

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## Stay connected - to your support group

It remains a challenging time for people to stay connected. While we have little or no community transmission of Covid-19 in Queensland, the precautions taken to achieve this are sometimes stressful and time consuming.

Many groups have taken advantage of Queensland's sunshine and/or wrapped up warmly and met outside. Some had great fun learning Zoom. Others did joint activities that they could do apart. It was great to hear so many original ideas.

One difficulty our groups have told us about is that sometimes they didn't have each

that group members have been unable to turn to each other. We have facilitated this for a few groups with a privacy questionnaire and then sharing phone lists around a group. We believe this is an important wake up call for community organisations - you may help people to connect via you, but do you help them to connect safely to each other?

While Zoom and being connected on-line have led to some really great experiences and some groups are changing their ways of working for the better, we would encourage people to think through your own group's risks and carefully plan to meet face-to-face where and when possible. We are assisting several groups to change venues, as the group and their hosts no longer match up well. Please connect with us if you are in this situation.

We are current taking expressions of interest from people who would be interested in joining a grief and bereavement support group. There are many groups already doing wonderful work in this field, particularly for loss of a partner, loss of a child and a loss due to suicide or homicide. However, if you or someone you know are experiencing a different kind of loss please get in touch. Or perhaps you would like to be a [Good Grief](#) support group leader? Self Help Queensland does have training subsidies available for support group leaders.

We are recruiting for an [Admin and Communications Worker](#), If you are motivated to assist groups of people to navigate complex information and find new ways to support each other through Covid-19, isolation, mental health, and technology challenges, this might be the job for you.

Selina and the Self Help Team

The antique map below is from my calendar. I see it everyday, a great reminder that maps don't usually have red spots all over them. Have you got an image or item that helps you calmly reconnect with the world?



## Q&A: What SHQ was asked about recently...

### Q: Is it secure to have a meeting on Zoom?

#### A:

Zoom makes it easy for people to join a meeting, so that's both its strength and its weakness. Ways to increase your security are:

- give each meeting has its own ID link and random code (some people use the same one every time),
- send the link shortly before the meeting, not a long time ahead,
- set meetings up with a password to enter,
- have the chimes enabled to know if anyone joins or leaves,
- don't publicly post the meeting ID anywhere, only through person to person (Most famously Boris Johnson posted a photo of his Zoom cabinet meeting with the meeting ID in the picture).

There is a function to lock the meeting after all participants join. If you are doing any videoconferencing that you would like to make sure is private, the meeting host should use the lock function (the setting is under "manage participants").

There are many different videoconferencing applications and they range in price. Zoom is just one option, where you can have forty minutes for free. The guiding principle to choose is what will make it easiest for your people to join you on-line and what kind of meeting experience you are looking for.

## From the old to some new ideas and resources for you

### Meal Deliveries

Visiting the supermarket and cooking at home alone may be a major challenge for some people at the best times, so now when things are tough, why not try [Meals on Wheels](#). You can refer yourself and meal costs are way below a restaurant takeaway.

### Met your neighbours?

It can be difficult to connect with people particularly when we are sick or anxious, sad or busy. Now is the time to have a conversation with your neighbours about things they need to know about you. Do you work shifts and sleep during the day? Do you have any family close by? Do you need emergency backup? Try for small and simple exchanges that you can build upon, conversation tips [here](#)!

### Using your senses to cope - new free resource

From Insight, this free [sensory tool](#) has been designed to assist people to cope by using your senses. It was designed to assist people using alcohol and other drugs, but it is a tool with useful coping ideas for anyone.

### Masks - a confusing question

There are hundreds of different approaches to masks around the world, so here is a well researched article covering the Australian context.

<https://www.gps-can.com.au/covid19-blog/masks-to-wear-or-not-to-wear>.

### James Cook University offers their expertise on-line

Are you someone who likes to have a deeper understanding of the science and the data? Try these [webinars](#) from James Cook University.

### I speak your language: Queensland-wide support available

For people to stay connected when English is not their first language, referrals are open for community volunteers to have a weekly chat with people in their own language. Phone: 1800 95 4040

We need your help - if you know about a quality resource that you think other support groups would like to know about, please share it with us so we can share with others.

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## Coping with Eczema and hand washing

with eczema and their families. They note the following:

- warm water is fine, hot water offers no advantage and can aggravate your skin,
- pat rather than rub your hands dry and use a good moisturiser,
- an anti-bacterial soap is not necessary and soap free cleansers can be used for your 20 seconds of hand washing,
- hand sanitisers vary, but there are some that are well tolerated by people with eczema.

Their [website](#) offers lots of detailed information to support people to manage their eczema and our hand washing will need to be better forever!

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## Genes and body weight

How does our genetic makeup influence our food intake? We all know someone who seems to have a normal dietary intake and yet can't shed the extra kilos that make life a misery. But there are also people who eat vast amounts and still stay whippet thin. Is it the way they were brought up, or is there something in the genetics of those people that gives them the body shape they have?

One factor is the number of fat cells that develop in the body of growing children. In adults, the number of fat cells is closely linked to body mass index, a measure of the amount of fat in the body. So if you have more fat cells, there is more potential for storing fat and hence being overweight. Adults can increase the size but not the number of their fat cells, while children can increase the number. What sets the number of fat cells laid down in childhood is probably a combination of diet (if there is lots of fat in the diet, the body makes the cells to store it) and genetic variants in the genes that are involved in limiting the number of fat cells.

If diet (environment) plays a part in what we eat, can our genetic makeup also influence that? What we like to eat is partly determined by its taste and smell and people perceive taste and smell differently, because of variation in certain genes (see SHQ Newsletter, November 2017). If you have the versions of genes that make sweet things seem delicious then you are more likely to overindulge and take in too many kilojoules. That sweet tooth might be genetic!

Our weight and body shape are also decided by how our bodies deal with the fuel (food) we put in them. Metabolism is the term for the processes that breakdown fats, proteins and carbohydrates into smaller molecules and then build them again into different molecules required by the body. Metabolism both makes and uses energy. Those skinny people who eat like horses may in fact be inefficient metabolisers: some of the energy from the food they eat is wasted so they need more food intake

molecules, and this is influenced by genetic variants in the genes for those proteins. The golden rule for maintaining a healthy weight is “energy in = energy out”, but working out your own balance can be tricky, when each of us has a unique genetic makeup.

Some conditions that change to body weight are related to our mental state, and that can also be determined by our genetic makeup. Eating disorders seem to be linked to our genetics in the same way as depression, schizophrenia and other recognised psychiatric disorders.

Author: Prof Kim Summers

If you have developed eating concerns during the past few months, seek help through:

Dieticians Association of Australia:

<https://daa.asn.au/smart-eating-for-you/nutrition-tips-and-advice-during-covid-19/>

For eating disorders: <https://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/> 1800 334 673

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## Support for your group: changes we need to make it safer to meet in person.

It feels complicated, but here is a short list of simple things to do.

### Think about some changes...

1. Things we pass around - eg. shared food, pens, photos. What are these in your group and reconsider how this can be done, eg. individually wrapped snacks, bring your own...
  2. Get out the tape measure, remove chairs or change spaces, less people may be able to attend in a room.
  3. Do you need RSVPs or no touch sign-ons - a particularly tough one of anonymous meetings.
  4. Allow extra time, we may more time to set and pack up, sign in or queue with spaces.
  5. Update your job rosters - time for everyone to pitch in with cleaning, high touch things like handles are particularly important.
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**Staying apart but together, physical not social distancing.**



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*We are open Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 4:30pm*

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