

All the latest info from Self Help Queensland

[View this email in your browser](#)



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.

[Donate now to support our work](#)

In this issue...

- [SHQ: talking about overload](#)
- [Q&A: What SHQ has been asked about this month](#)
- [A quick roundup of some overload issues](#)
- [WoW - Wheel of Well-being - free workshop at Sunnybank for our groups](#)
- [Advocating for women's roles: The Queensland Women's Health Network](#)
- [Hoarding - too much stuff](#)
- [Iron Overload - too much is a bad thing](#)
- [Support for your group: Overload](#)

This month at Self Help Queensland

This issue we are featuring topics relating to "overload". Thanks to all our writers who've shared their thoughts on the topic, from situations and strategies, to hoarding and haemochromatosis, we hope there is something new for you.

While the saying goes "if you want something done, ask a busy person", many volunteers, carers and community workers are at risk of overload, an important reminder as National Volunteer Week approaches (May 20-26). We are offering a free

We have a wonderful team of volunteers here, and we also know how many support groups depend on volunteers. You are important to us and everyone you help. Thank you.

Selina and the Self Help Team

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

Q: Do support groups really work?

A: Yes! They do!

There is actually a large amount of research evidence that has demonstrated that support groups are effective, that connecting with other people who are in the same boat does improve your health. We are in the process of updating our literature review of the evidence for support groups and what helps a support group work effectively. If you are interested in know more about this, or you have a great article or example to share, please contact Selina.

Overload issues - a quick roundup

Sleep, it's the best medicine

A [new study](#) has found that trying to catch up from an overloaded week by sleeping in on the weekend is not effective. The take home message is crowding activities in during the week and missing sleep, thinking you can catch up later, is not going to work. Time for a new plan!

If you aren't sleeping well, make sure seek help through your health provider.

[Sleep Disorders Australia](#) has a closed facebook group for Australians dealing with the more than 60 sleep conditions.

Rest is best

A [study](#) released in April suggests that 4 weeks rest offered equal relief for overuse disorder injuries like repetitive strain injury (RSI) as compared to drug therapy. There

Autism sensory overload

Great new [youtube video](#) from @TheAspieWorld talking about sensory overload and trying to deal with triggers.

Dealing with information overload

“Getting information off of the internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant.”
(Mitchell Kapor, 1991)

This [information overload](#) article has some great perspectives, particularly for Self Help Queensland as we figure out a huge reorganisation of our website. Next week at Connecting Up, Selina will consider IT strategies and solutions for two days... which she will share over the coming months in small bites (or bytes).

Wheel of Well-being



WoW Wheel of Well-being

About WoW

Regardless of what curve balls life throws at us, we can be more satisfied with our lives overall and feel more peace, more joy and more contentment. Who wouldn't rather flourish than merely exist!

Over the past fifteen years, a [growing field of research](#) combining aspects of psychology, health and economics is exploring what makes us happy and what kind of things we can do to improve our well-being.

It has been partly fuelled by the rapid pace of social, environmental and technological change and partly fuelled by a growing recognition that money isn't buying us as much happiness as we had thought it would.

There are specific actions we can take to improve our moods, reduce the risk of

depression, strengthen relationships, improve our problem solving, keep us healthy, recover from surgery more quickly, and even add seven years to our lives. This is not about faking being happy or pretending bad stuff isn't happening. We can be experiencing adversity and increase our well-being at the same time.

The Queensland Mental Health Commission funded training for community organisations and neighbourhood centres to deliver [Wheel of Wellbeing \(WoW\) workshops](#) to improve the well-being of the general community.

The Wheel of Well-being evolved from a DIY Happiness course, a health promotion activity of Maudsley International to improve the well-being of people in the South of London in 2008. WoW is designed as a flexible and creative framework to explore the component parts of happy lives. There are six colour coded parts to the wheel representing universal aspects of well-being which are body, mind, spirit, people, place and planet with suggestions for action.

Each WoW workshop explores a different part of the Wheel of Well-being and combines practical learning activities with easy to understand explanations of the underpinning research. Workshops are interactive and allow plenty of time for discussion.

Workshop Thursday 30th May 6-9pm at Sunnybank Hall

Join WoW facilitator and Self Help Queensland President Melody Edwardson for an introduction to the Wheel of Well-being. Melody is a mental health professional who has worked in community organisations for 30 years.

If you are tired, feeling a bit blah or would like to feel better than OK this is a workshop for you. It is also a wonderful opportunity to connect with members of other self help groups. Sunnybank Hall is at 121 Lister Street Sunnybank - it is wheelchair accessible with lots of off-street parking, a short distance from Sunnybank train station and on bus routes 123 and 135.

This free workshop is open to a limited number of participants, please RSVP to Selina via email info@selfhelpqld.org.au or phone 3344 6919.



Queensland Women's Health Network - 25 years strong

What is women's health?

Women's health is much more than body parts and diseases, periods, pregnancy, and menopause. Our well-being is influenced by many factors in our lives and our worlds.

When we talk about 'health', we are talking about a social view of health (also referred to by the World Health Organisation as the '[social determinants of health](#)'), and that's a much bigger picture. The social view of health looks at the many different forces that can affect our health, such as: where we live, access to services, age, sex, culture, ability, violence, transport, employment and housing.

For example, sex-role stereotyping creates the expectation that women should prioritise the needs of others and undertake unpaid caring work whenever required,

were more likely to provide care than men across the lifespan, with women making up 60% of all carers aged 15 years and over.”¹ Furthermore, “[a]mong people aged 55 to 64 years, the number of female primary carers (134,500) was almost double the number of male primary carers (70,800).”²

Whether full-time, part-time, or occasional, the additional workload of a caring role can directly impact a woman’s physical and mental health, financial situation, and ability to participate in other activities. Moreover, “[t]he undervaluing of women’s unpaid care work is linked to poorer health and well-being outcomes for carers and limits women’s participation in the paid workforce” which in turn impacts superannuation and retirement.³

So who is Queensland Women’s Health Network (QWHN), and what do you do?

We raise public awareness of women’s health issues using a social model of health and feminist analysis, and provide links between women involved in, or interested in, women’s health. Although QWHN is a relatively small non-profit organisation, our voluntary Management Committee, and our members, are located throughout Queensland to ensure coverage of regional issues. We are members of the national peak body, the Australian Women’s Health Network (AWHN), the Secretariat of the Women’s Health Services Alliance (WHSa), and foundation members of the state peak body, Ending Violence Against Women Queensland (EVAWQ).

How and when did QWHN start?

Like many other women’s health organisations, QWHN was a result of the feminist women’s health movement of the 1970s and 80s, and part of wider national and international health reforms of the era. Preliminary discussions about forming a Queensland Women’s Health Network commenced in 1986, following a National Community Health Conference in Adelaide. The Network was formed out of a continuing concern to expand the existing system of health care to give attention to the unique experience of women.

“From what we understand, the women worked hard visioning the Network and produced the document ‘Health Needs of Queensland Women,’” said Dr Betty McLellan, Chairperson of QWHN. “So in this current financial year we are really pleased to be celebrating our 25th anniversary!”

Want to find out more?

The QWHN [website](#) provides links to a wide range of organisations, services, and information, plus articles about women’s health, and a list of relevant events in Queensland. You can also view or subscribe to our regular [newsletters](#), each of which

Contact details:

Queensland Women's Health Network Inc

Tel: (07) 4789 0665

QWHN receives funding from the Queensland Government (Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women).

© QWHN 2019

References

1. ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016
2. ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings, 2015
3. Women's Health Victoria (2018) Spotlight on women and unpaid care. Women's Health Victoria. Melbourne.

Hoarding- too much stuff

An estimated 2-5% of adults in Australia are living with a hoarding disorder, in which the individual has difficulty parting with possessions (regardless of value), leading to excessive accumulation of possessions and clutter in their home. This could be due to fear of needing an item after it has been disposed of, distorted beliefs, and emotional attachment.

Hoarding becomes an issue when it causes distress and has a negative impact on everyday life. Negative impacts can include social isolation and financial hardship (due to the acquisition of new items), as well as being unable to maintain their home which can result in unhygienic living conditions, presenting a health hazard.

Hoarding disorders not only affect the individual, but also have an emotional impact on family and friends, with feelings such as confusion, frustration, anger and resentment, thereby causing relationship strain.

How can you help a loved one living with a hoarding disorder?

- Ask your loved one how you can assist, rather than just clearing out their belongings which will cause distress. If they are ready, take small steps such as starting with a small area in the house, or throwing out a small number of items per week.
- Your support is vitally important, especially if they are socially isolated as a result of their disorder. Let them know that you are there for them.
- Encourage them to visit a GP to be referred to a mental health practitioner such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.
- Support groups are also useful, as they allow the individual to connect with others

For tips on how to help someone living with a hoarding disorder, visit [Sane Australia](#).

Changes to Diagnosis

Hoarding had previously been listed as a diagnostic criteria for OCPD (Obsessive-compulsive Personality Disorder). Now it has been classified as a separate disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition (DSM-5). This will help to ensure correct diagnosis and treatment, as well as increase public awareness of the disorder and its affects.

Support Services

We were unable to find any face-to-face hoarding support groups in Queensland – if you know of any please get in touch with us! [GROW](#) provides support groups for all mental health concerns. For online support, there is a closed facebook group for those impacted by hoarding. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hcSupportGroup/>

Tamara

Iron Overload - too much is a bad thing

Haemochromatosis is a disease in which iron from the diet is stored in the tissues of the body, mainly the liver. If the iron levels are not brought down people can suffer from a range of problems, including liver cancer, diabetes, arthritis, pigmented skin, sexual dysfunction and chronic tiredness.

Haemochromatosis is genetic, and is caused by abnormality of a gene called HFE. The most common variant associated with haemochromatosis replaces the amino acid cysteine with tyrosine at position 282 in the HFE protein. This is abbreviated to p.Cys282Tyr. People who inherit a copy of this variant from both parents are at high risk of haemochromatosis.

We have known for a long time that haemochromatosis is the most common genetic disease in people of European origin. Now a study of more than 450,000 people in the UK has shown that about 1 person in 100 had two copies of the variant and was at high risk of iron overload. But only 15% of these had been diagnosed with haemochromatosis so that they could receive treatment.

There are a few reasons why people with two copies of the risk variant had not been picked up. Not everyone will accumulate excess iron. It depends on how much iron is in the diet and on other factors whether the iron will build up enough to give the symptoms that send you to the doctor. Those symptoms can be quite vague – the

If the symptoms are fairly mild do you need to worry about the build-up of iron? The UK Biobank study answers that question. Although only 15% of the people at risk had actually had a diagnosis of haemochromatosis, about another 20% had a diagnosis related to haemochromatosis (for example other liver disease including liver cancer, diabetes, osteoarthritis), which was about twice the number in the people with no copies of the risk variant. The people with two copies of the risk variant were also two times more likely to have had a hip replacement and eight times more likely to have died from liver cancer. Interestingly, the study also found that carrying two copies of p.Cys282Tyr seemed to have no effect on cardiovascular disease. In fact, there was less use of cholesterol lowering drugs in this group and slightly lower levels of coronary artery disease.

Kim Summers



PS. Haemochromatosis Australia organises support groups and info Australia-wide. Check out their [youtube channel](#) where they've added some great stories.

Support for your group: Overload

There's lots of ways to try to reduce your load, we challenge you to act on just one, your own idea or one of ours if you like!

A few ideas for overload

1. Do less....we can't do everything! Maybe you want to do peer support, GP education, NDIS support, fundraising, lobbying, community awareness... Narrow down your list, it's OK to start small. Has your group got a way to decide together on what are your priorities?
2. Share the load. Sometimes we don't accept offers to help because the list seems long and overwhelming. Get your list into bite size pieces, then share out lots of smaller pieces.
3. How can you control time or confine the time you spend on a task? For example, if you use facebook for your group, use the schedule posts function. Especially useful for a regular event.
4. Take a break. A change isn't as good as a holiday. Check your calendar and block out some time.

takers when you were expecting a dozen. Or, the opposite, you need a comfortable place for 5 not an echoing hall for 50. This kind of planning saves you work in the long run.



Reduce your stress - take some time in a natural setting every day.



121 Lister Street (PO Box 353), Sunnybank QLD 4109

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

Phone: 07 3344 6919

Newsletter content is provided for information purposes only and is not a substitute for your health professional's advice. The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors and not necessarily those of Self Help Qld. The editor reserves the right to edit contributed articles.

We gratefully acknowledge the funding support of Self Help Queensland by Queensland Health.



Queensland Government

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Self Help Queensland Inc · 121 Lister St · Sunnybank, Qld 4109 · Australia

