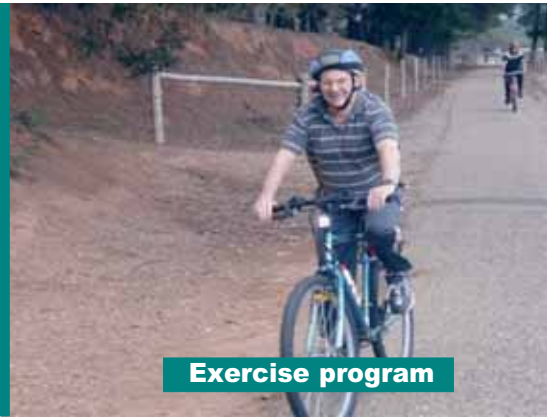




Upper Hume
Community
Health Service



Members at last year's AGM



Exercise program

2007/2008 Quality of Care Report



Smiles 4 Miles



Our new home
155 High St Wodonga purchased by DHS



Older Persons activities



GT House Clients artwork



McGrath Foundation Pink Breakfast Fundraiser



CEO Leonard Peady and
The Hon Candy Broad MLC

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Health promotion message - health survey | 2 |
| From the CEO | 3 |
| Health promotion message - Exercise | 4 |
| Our environment and staff | 5 |
| Health promotion message – Healthy weight | 6 |
| The Employee Health Committee | 7 |
| Health promotion message – Drink water | 8 |
| Volunteers and Students | 9 |
| Health promotion message – 2 fruit and 5 veg | 10 |
| QICSA Accreditation Review | 11 |
| Health promotion message – Quit smoking | 12 |
| Clinical Governance – Quality and Safety | 13 |
| Health promotion message – Alcohol consumption | 14 |
| Health Inequity and Quality Assurance in Community Health | 15 |
| Health promotion message – Drugs | 16 |
| Pharmacotherapies Program | 17 |
| Health promotion message – SunSmart | 18 |
| Partnerships | 19 |
| Health promotion message – Positive parenting | 20 |
| Embarking together on a learning journey | 21 |
| Health promotion message – Seek help and talk it over | 22 |
| Tai Chi | 23 |
| Health promotion message – Sleep well | 24 |
| Get Together House – Participants’ Reflections | 25 |
| Health promotion message – Take time to breath deeply | 26 |
| Gambler’s Help | 27 |

A quick Health Survey - Do You Know What It Takes to Lead a Long Happy Healthy Life?

More importantly – are you taking action?

Take this quick quiz to see how well you are travelling.

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Do you exercise daily for at least 30 minutes? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are you maintaining a healthy weight? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables every day? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you drink 8 glasses of water every day? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are you a non smoker? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you have alcohol free days each week? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you live an illicit drug free life? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you protect yourself from the sun's UV rays? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you find it easy being a parent? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you have someone to talk to about things that are bothering you? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you sleep well at night? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Do you take time to breath deeply and relax daily? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

If you answered **YES** to the questions above you are well on your way to living a long happy healthy life.

If you answered **NO** to any of the questions above read on. This document is filled with vital information for you about each of the quiz questions above. Come on, just a few simple changes will help you get more out of life!

MORE INFORMATION

For facts sheets on all your health and wellness questions log onto www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Or call Upper Hume Community Health Service – 0260 228888

From the CEO

It gives me great pleasure to present to you our second Quality of Care Report for Upper Hume Community Health Service. In line with our desire to continually improve the way we do things, we have made improvements to this report based on feedback received on our first Quality of Care Report. We value your comments, so please feel free to let us know how you think we could improve on this report or any of our services.

The Quality of Care Report provides information about our environment, our internal processes that help us to deliver high quality health-related services to our community and some of our projects. The report also details how our internal quality systems work to help us learn, and improve the way we do things.

During 2007/2008 Upper Hume Community Health Service (UHCHS) continued to focus on quality improvements in its operations and activities. This report provides some examples of how we achieved this. For instance, on page 15 we describe a project to reduce health inequalities. On page 27 we provide a perspective from a client about our Gambler's Help program. We use research, experience, feedback and reflection to increase our knowledge and to improve our performance.

We receive feedback about our performance from many sources including government departments which provide some of our funding, community members, clients and staff. During the year the Board of UHCHS surveyed all staff to obtain feedback on the Board's and the CEO's performance. Reflecting on what we do and how we do it and looking for ways to improve, contributes to our growth as an organisation. Improvements at the Board and CEO level can lead to improvements in service delivery and therefore, better client outcomes.

UHCHS continues to focus on the impact of social disadvantage on health. We continue to prioritise our service delivery to the most disadvantaged groups in our community. Our goal is to work in partnership with our clients as we acknowledge that they know more about their requirements and the solutions that will work for them than we do.

We will continue to work together with our clients to build a healthier community.

Leonard Peady
Chief Executive Officer

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 1

Exercise daily for at least 30 minutes

WHY?

Few things are as good for you as physical activity. Just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day can help prevent or reduce your risk for:

- High blood pressure
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Obesity
- Heart disease, heart attack and stroke
- High cholesterol
- Cancer
- Depression

But it's not just about long term benefits; being physically active gives you immediate benefits of;

- A natural high from increased blood flow and hormone release
- Improved strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and movement
- Improved posture and reduced joint pain and more energy.

**The bottom line is regular physical activity
will make you feel good**

WHAT and HOW?

Physical activity does not have to be complicated or expensive. The best physical activity is the one/s you enjoy and will do regularly.

Four key steps to good health are:

- Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience, any form of movement is an opportunity to improve your health.
- Be active every day in as many ways as you can, make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car.
- Do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most, preferably all days. Moderate activity includes such things as a brisk walk or cycling. Combine short sessions of different activities of about 10-15 minutes each to a total of 30 minutes.
- If you can, try some regular, vigorous exercise for extra health and fitness benefits. Vigorous exercise makes you 'huff and puff'.



**Walk - Run -
Swim - Ride -
Skip - Hop -
Jump - Sports
- Play**

QUALITY AND SAFETY

Our environment and our staff

Most UHCHS staff are now located in our premises at 155 High Street, Wodonga. The opportunity to have all staff working from the one site has enhanced the quality of their occupational health and improved team spirit. All staff are now actively managed from this single site with the exception of Highwater Theatre at Gateway Island. A major advantage of the High Street location is its convenience and accessibility to clients.

UHCHS prides itself on its safety record. In accordance with the 'need to consult' requirement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004, the agency's OHS committee is made up of staff members from each program area. The purpose of the committee is to not only satisfy all legal requirements but also to ensure a healthy and safe workplace for all staff and a safe environment for clients and visitors to the agency. The OHS committee meets regularly to consider identified hazards, reported incidents, staff and client feedback, and related matters. This continuous cycle of improvement is embedded in the agency's culture, ensuring we are constantly striving for safer and better methods of service delivery.

The dedicated professionals at UHCHS are often engaged in activities that lead them into situations that may be uncomfortable and, at times, confronting. Our staff's willingness to continue to deliver service and to remain client focused is testament to their professionalism, and reflects the culture of care at UHCHS.

We are constantly striving to improve our internal environment to ensure that our clients' experience is safe, risk-free and pleasant. As a direct response to client feedback, work carried out in the High Street building this year has included the painting of counselling rooms and commissioning of artwork from local artists and client participants. We have also improved the monitoring and maintenance of our air conditioning system. Each of these changes has contributed to a happier and healthier workplace.

The decision to include a Public Dental clinic in the near future will further strengthen community participation in the diverse range of programs being delivered from 155 High street.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 2

Maintain a Healthy Weight

WHY?

Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the keys to good health and wellbeing. When our weight is at a healthy level, we are at less risk of developing high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, or having a stroke. Children are also at risk of developing these illnesses, and so it is important that they are encouraged to maintain a healthy weight. Besides preventing illness and disease, keeping our weight in check has other benefits including having more energy and feeling good about ourselves.

WHAT and HOW?

You don't need to go on fad diets. Maintaining your weight is about adopting healthy eating habits, undertaking physical activity regularly and feeling good about yourself.

The following tips can help you maintain a healthy weight:

- Eat regular meals - Skipping meals not only makes you feel tired and lethargic, it also may lead to you snacking and eating more than you would normally.
- Adopt a healthy eating approach - Crash or fad dieting is a short-term solution that leads to your body lowering its metabolic rate (the rate at which we use energy). When this happens your body burns fewer calories, and you lose less weight.
- Understand why and when you overeat - Understanding why we eat when we are not actually hungry helps us learn to do other things such as exercise or phone a friend. We often confuse signs of thirst with being hungry, so try drinking a large glass of water before having something to eat.



Babies and children also need to have a healthy diet. For infants, breastfeed for the first twelve months if possible.

For babies and children:

- Choose foods that contain no added sugar. Instead of giving sugary snacks, offer fruit.
- Provide a varied diet that includes plenty of fresh foods. Low fat diets are not appropriate for infants and young children under two years of age.
- Offer water. Babies and children should be encouraged to choose water as their preferred drink.
- Ensure children eat breakfast. Children need a healthy breakfast for their physical development as well as for being able to stay active and concentrate at school.

QUALITY AND SAFETY

The Employee Health Committee

Employee health and wellbeing is vital to the provision of quality services. It enhances staff productivity and reduces absenteeism and staff turnover. The Employee Health Committee (EHC), which was established in 2001, is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating a variety of activities for staff to boost their health and wellbeing. While traditional employee health programs tend to focus on physical health such as blood pressure checks, subsidized gym memberships and lunch-time exercise groups, the EHC has chosen to focus on promoting mental health through three main areas of activity:

- promoting social connection and a sense of belonging and being valued by the organisation;
- stress management; and
- participation in the community.

To promote social connection and belonging we organize quarterly staff lunches and monthly agency-wide morning teas, and encourage all staff to participate and get to know each other. We facilitate an employee recognition program in which staff are encouraged to nominate another staff member as the monthly 'champion' in recognition of effort or success, or even learn-from-the-experience mistakes!

For stress management, staff have access to free, monthly onsite sessions of either massage, Bowen therapy or Reiki. Occasionally we offer yoga sessions at a reduced cost. A monthly workplace health magazine is circulated to all staff, and health promotion material is provided with pay slips.

UHCHS staff are encouraged and supported to participate in the community by becoming regular blood donors (in work time) and by participating in the annual Cancer Council Relay for Life fundraising/awareness 24-hour walk event. Staff incorporate various social activities into the event each year. In addition, 100% of the gold coin voluntary payments made by staff for all EHC activities are donated to the Relay for Life fund.

Feedback on EHC activities, collected each year as part of the agency staff survey, routinely identifies a strong level of support for EHC activities, and a high degree of appreciation of the contribution of these activities to the workplace culture.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 3

Drink eight glasses of water daily

WHY?

The human body can survive weeks without food, but only days without water. It is made up of 55–75 per cent water as it forms the basis of blood, digestive juices, urine and perspiration and is contained in lean muscle, fat and bones. Water is needed to:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Maintain the health and integrity of every cell in the body. | Aid digestion and prevent constipation. |
| Help eliminate the by products of the body's metabolism. | Regulate body temperature through sweating. |
| Keep the bloodstream flowing. | Lubricate and cushion joints. |
| Reduce the risk of cystitis by clearing the bladder of bacteria. | Keep mucous membranes moist, ie. lungs and mouth. |
| Work as a moisturiser to improve the skin's texture and appearance. | Carry nutrients and oxygen to cells. |
- Serve as a shock absorber inside the eyes, spinal cord and in the amniotic sac surrounding the foetus in pregnancy.



In the short term, insufficient water can result in headaches, lethargy, mood changes and slow responses, dry nasal passages, dry or cracked lips, dark-coloured urine, weakness, tiredness, confusion and hallucinations. In the long term insufficient consumption of water increases your risk of kidney stones and, in women, urinary tract infections.

WHAT and HOW?

Approximately eight glasses of fluids should be consumed each day. People that are physically active, children, those in hot or humid environments, and breastfeeding women need more whilst sedentary people, older people, people in a cold environment or people who eat a lot of high water content foods may need less.

Fluids include fresh water and other liquids like juice, soft drinks, tea, milk and soup. Fresh water is the best drink because it does not contain kilojoules. Milk is important (especially for children) and tea can be a source of antioxidants. Fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice because it has more fibre and nutrients and less sugar; sweet drinks should be limited because they add calories without nutrient value.

Encourage yourself to drink water by having a jug of water and/or a water bottle available and visible.

QUALITY AND SAFETY

Volunteers & Students

Volunteers

Volunteers are involved in a range of activities including:

- supporting group facilitators;
- conducting exercise programs;
- providing database and administration support; and
- helping organise events and fund raising activities.

Volunteers become involved in UHCHS in a number of ways. Sometimes a staff member invites someone they know to apply and some offer their support after hearing about our services. Others were once students on placement who wish to remain involved, and some are recruited via the Volunteer Resource Bureau.

Since November 2007 the agency has employed staff to coordinate all aspects of volunteering and student placements. Anyone interested needs to complete an application form and consent to a police record check.

Students

UHCHS is committed to participating in the training and education of future health care professionals. To reflect this commitment, UHCHS provides many opportunities for students to undertake their placements and work experience. We recognise that student placements encourage inter-professional understanding and collaboration. Students come from many disciplines, including Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Community Welfare, Nursing and Psychology, and from Year 10 work experience programs.

Student placements are organised through the student placement coordinator, usually in conjunction with the universities, TAFE Colleges, and other education providers. UHCHS provides each student with an agency induction and a student orientation package.



Some of our students: Alyce Mensch, Melita Harding, Shilo Trebley & Kim Baker

Quality placements offered by UHCHS provide students with the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the principles and practices of community health, and the benefits of working within a social model of health framework.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 4

Eat two fruit & five vegetables daily

WHY?

Eating fruits and vegetables is an essential building block for good health. Fruits and vegetables contain many vitamins and minerals, are low in fat, salt, and sugar and provide a great source of dietary fibre and energy.

Research show fruits and vegetables contain plant chemicals that help protect against chronic diseases. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is really important for children. It will help them to have the energy they need to play, concentrate better, learn, sleep better and build stronger teeth and bones. It also builds healthy habits for their adult lives. **But the best thing about fruits and vegetable is they taste great!**

WHAT and HOW?

Different fruits and vegetables contain different nutrients therefore it is important to eat a variety. An easy way to do this is to choose fruits and vegetables that are lots of different colours. Everyone should eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables daily. The serving size will be smaller for children. Increase your and your children's consumption of fruits and vegetables by:

- Involving children in the shopping and preparation of fruit and vegetables.
- Increasing the variety of vegetables in your favourite family recipes such as pasta sauces, soups or stir-fries.

Try these ideas for snacks:

- Jacket potato
- Stewed fruit
- Fruit kebabs
- Fruit crumble
- Plain homemade popcorn
- Corn on the cob
- Fruit on toast e.g. banana & strawberry
- Frozen fruit or vegetable segments
- Fruit salad or a fruit platter
- Tinned fruits in juice
- Muffins, pikelets or cakes made with added fruit or vegetables
- Cut-up vegetables with salsa or yoghurt dips

Keeping snack size fruits and vegetables in the fridge or on the bench makes them more accessible and appealing. Serving vegetables with a pesto, salsa, creamy sauce or dressing also tantalizes the taste buds. And eating fruits and vegetables that are in season will keep the costs down.



ACCREDITATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

QICSA Accreditation Review

Following is the report of the third Quality Improvement Council Accreditation Review of UHCHS conducted in April 2008:

"This review was conducted according to requirements of the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Standards and Accreditation Program. This review assesses the extent to which the organisation meets the QIC Health and Community Services Core Standards, the QIC Community & Primary Health Care Standards, and the Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS) standards. Four levels of attainment are used to give an overall rating for each QIC standard. The levels are: Leading Practice, Met, Met in Part, Not Met.

The purpose of this accreditation review report is record the findings of the external review upon which a recommendation for accreditation is made. It is also prepared to assist Upper Hume Community Health Service with future planning through identifying organisational strengths and achievements, areas for development and recommendations to support continuous quality improvement.

Evidence Trail - This represented a number of findings from:

- *analysis of Quality Journal;*
- *direct interviews with Board of Management (2), CEO, Managers (7), Staff (18), Consumers (5), Stakeholders (7);*
- *observations during site visits of fire equipment and safety measures, service and office settings and work practices;*
- *completed site inspection forms regarding Upper Hume Community Health Service prepared by staff;*
- *other documentation including: planning documents, policy and procedure manuals, Board minutes and agenda papers, committee meeting minutes and terms of reference, program manuals and client information.*

The focus of continuous quality improvement activity from the Quality Workplan over the past three years includes the implementation of a process for identification of issues for quality improvement; this system is seen to be working well. Throughout the review a culture of continuous quality improvement was evident, as well as a commitment to flexible, responsive, innovative and collaborative service delivery; this was apparent across the whole organisation. Interviews with stakeholders and clients were very positive."

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 5

Quit Smoking & Avoid Environmental Tobacco Smoke

WHY?

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. Tobacco currently kills over 17,000 Australians every year. It is a key risk factor for many different cancers (not just lung cancer) as well as heart disease, stroke, chronic bronchitis, and eye disease.

There are both immediate and long term benefits when quitting smoking. In the first few months health improves, blood flow increases to your hands and feet and the immune system improves. Long term you can add years to your life. If you already have a smoking related disease, quitting will improve your condition and assist in your treatment.

WHAT and HOW?

Some people find that quitting completely and immediately works. Others make several attempts to quit before succeeding and benefit from assistance and support.

The key is to learn from past attempts and build on them. A good first step is to write down all the reasons why you smoke and then all the reasons why it is absolutely crucial for you to quit. For example think about how much money you will save, how much time you will save, as well as the health benefits.

Some tips:

- Ask for the support of your family and friends.
- Learn from your prior attempts to quit. Plan how to avoid the same pitfalls this time.
- Decide on your strategy e.g. cold turkey, use nicotine replacement therapy, QUIT Line etc.
- Regularly refer to your list of reasons why you want to stop smoking especially when you want to light up.
- Throw away all cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays in your home and car. If your partner smokes, suggest that he or she stops too, or only smokes outside the house and away from you.

Remember the four D's:

- Delay acting on the urge to reach for a cigarette
- Take Deep breaths
- Drink water
- Do something else to occupy your mind

Where to get help:

Your doctor, Local Pharmacist
Call the QUIT Line 13 78 48, www.quit.org.au
Or contact Upper Hume Community Health Service
0260 228888

ACCREDITATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Clinical Governance - Quality and Safety of Clinical Services

More and more emphasis is being placed on 'clinical governance' - the quality and safety of clinical services provided by community health centres. The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards has defined clinical governance as:

'The systems by which the governing body, managers and clinicians share responsibility and are held accountable for patient or client care, minimising risks to consumers, and for continuously monitoring and improving the quality of clinical care.'

At Upper Hume Community Health Service we take very seriously the quality of the services we provide and the outcomes for our clients. We have systems in place to monitor the quality of our service delivery to ensure we provide the best service we can.

Listed below are some of the activities we undertake to ensure our client services are of a high standard:

- Academic history checks of all our staff to ensure they have the appropriate qualifications for the work they do.
- Random audits of client records to make sure all information in the file is complete.
- Regular supervision of all our staff where cases are discussed and monitored.
- Ongoing training for all staff.
- A centralised client intake service and waiting list management system.
- A formal client complaints process and register, to monitor all complaints (so that we learn from complaints).
- Regular surveys of our clients to get feedback about our services.
- A regular cycle for reviewing and updating our policies and procedures relating to client service delivery.

We understand that the Board, Managers and staff share responsibility for the quality and safety of clinical services. We all participate in different ways to provide the highest standard of services possible. Our Board of Directors has undergone training to educate them about clinical governance and the Board's responsibilities. Clients can participate in helping us achieve this goal by providing feedback to us about our services.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 6

Limit Alcohol Consumption

WHY?

Drinking alcohol in moderation may be good for the heart for some people. However, serious health problems can result from drinking large amounts of alcohol or binge drinking. 'Binge drinking' is drinking heavily over a short period of time or drinking continuously over a number of days or weeks.

Alcohol is a drug. Alcohol can severely impair the development of young people. Women who drink alcohol while pregnant are more likely to have babies that are smaller, premature and/or born with abnormalities including foetal alcohol syndrome. Additionally, alcohol is excreted into breast milk and can reduce milk supply and can cause damage to a baby's developing brain.

WHAT and HOW?

If you choose to drink it is important that you do so in moderation and that you have two alcohol-free days each week as a minimum.

Keep in mind the following guidelines:

Men – up to four standard drinks a day is a low risk for health problems. Five to six standard drinks a day is a considerable risk, seven or more standard drinks a day is a high risk for developing health problems.

Women – drinking up to two standard drinks a day is a low risk for health problems, three to four standard drinks a day is a considerable risk, five or more standard drinks a day is a high risk for developing health problems. It is recommended that women who are pregnant or breast feeding should avoid alcohol entirely.

Try monitoring your drinking by:

- Starting with a non-alcoholic drink.
- Eating before and while drinking to slow the absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream.
- Avoiding salty snacks that make you thirsty and make you drink more.
- Making every second or third drink non-alcoholic.
- Trying low alcohol drinks.



Always keep your drink with you to minimise the risk of drink spiking. The best way to avoid a hangover is to drink in moderation. There is no way to speed up the process of alcohol leaving your body. Cold showers, exercise, black coffee, fresh air or vomiting will not speed up the process.

Limit alcohol consumption & include alcohol free days weekly

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Health Inequity and Quality Assurance in Community Health Services - Pilot Project

"Health inequalities can be defined as differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups."
(World Health Organisation)

UHCHS, along with Women's Health Goulburn North East, has been working in partnership with representatives of the Department of Human Services, Hume Regional Office and Ovens & King Community Health Service, to develop an initiative to advance the organisational capacity of community health agencies to help address inequity. The aim of the project is to establish a continuous quality improvement framework that will maximise sustainable action to help reduce health inequalities.

Some of the outcomes of the project to date are:

- All UHCHS staff and management have been trained in the principles of equity. Subsequent staff surveys reveal that this training has increased understanding of the concept of equity. Additionally, staff have suggested ways that the agency's quality assurance process could support the organisation's work practices to achieve equity.

- The agency will use baseline data, profiling the demographic make-up of UHCHS clients, to determine where services are not being provided to a particular group or groups in the community. This information will also allow the UHCHS to determine, in the future, if service delivery has become more equitable.

- Focus groups have been conducted with the local Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and with community members attending the Felltimber Community Centre. The information gathered in these focus groups will help UHCHS to develop ways of better engaging with the community.

A final report on this project will be available later in 2008.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 7

Drugs - Choose a natural high – avoid illicit drugs

WHY?

A drug is any chemical which can change how you feel physically and mentally. Legal drugs include alcohol, caffeine, tobacco and prescription medications. Illegal drugs include cannabis, heroin, ecstasy and ice. All drugs have the potential to harm you, not just the illegal ones. Harm from drug misuse may result in you being hurt through violence, accidents or unsafe sex; all of which affect your physical and mental health.

WHAT and HOW?

There are a number of ways to minimise your risk of harm from using drugs. You can:

- Choose to stop using drugs altogether.
- Reduce the amount of drugs you use.
- Substitute the drug you use with something less harmful. For example you may choose to drink low alcohol beer instead of full strength beer, or drink decaffeinated tea or coffee instead of caffeinated beverages.

If you choose to use drugs, remember that:

- Illegal drugs often have unpredictable ingredients. You can't be sure what they contain or the amount of the actual drug that's present, this increases the risk.
- Mixing drugs, especially with alcohol, can be lethal.
- You don't need to feel pressured to take drugs of any kind. Make the decision for yourself not because your friends are taking them.
- You can choose to have a good time straight.



Where to get help:

- Your doctor
- Directline - alcohol & drug counselling and referral service Tel. 1800 888 236
- Upper Hume Comm Health Service ATOD Team 02 6022 8888
- Family Drug Help Tel. 1300 660 068

How to help your children

Adolescence is a time of experimentation. As a parent, you can influence the decision your child will make about using or not using drugs. However, even 'perfect' parenting does not guarantee that young people will not experiment with drugs. Creating a supportive environment helps. It's a good idea to:

- Give children accurate information about drugs; often they receive incorrect information from friends.
- Stay calm if you suspect your child is using drugs. Don't panic.
- Look at your own lifestyle. If you abuse alcohol or tobacco it's hard to lecture about drug abuse.
- Negotiate and listen to your child when you set behaviour guidelines.
- Remember we all make mistakes. It is part of growing up.

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Pharmacotherapies Program

The UHCHS Pharmacotherapies Program, previously known as the Methadone Program, has been operating since 1994. Initially the program operated within the parameters of the Rural Drug Withdrawal Program. In 1999 the program was further developed with funding through the National Illicit Drug Strategy, Non Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program. In October 2002 an extensive review and evaluation of the program was undertaken by external consultants. This provided significant opportunity for the organisation to reflect on the successes of the program to date, and to plan for future opportunities based on the recommendations from the report. Further funding was then sourced also through the National Illicit Drug Strategy, Non Government Organisation Treatment grants program 2003 – 2006, 2006 - 2008. The program continued to grow in strength. A comprehensive evaluation of the program concluded that there is a 'high level of satisfaction with the service provided'.

The program consists of *"a completed course of treatment undertaken by a client under the care of an alcohol and drug worker which achieves a significant treatment goal."*

This model has evolved out of a demand for pharmacotherapy treatment and after a review in 2006 to fill the gap in service provision caused by a GP shortage in the Albury-Wodonga region. The program is now staffed by a GP, nurse and counsellor to offer a multidisciplinary service. The pharmacotherapy clinic provides a service for 10 to 12 clients per week.

Over a period of four years, a total of 247 people have benefited from this service. Since the clinic commenced in 2006, there has been greater support for clients in regard to treatment options and outcomes.

There has been a significant increase in referrals from local GPs of patients reporting opioid dependence. At this stage, there is no capacity to accept additional clients as additional resources are required to match the increasing rate of referrals.

As the clinic is available to any clients experiencing issues with any substances, not exclusively treatment of opiate dependence, it is envisaged that the use of pharmacotherapies for cannabis and amphetamine dependence will be included in treatment options in the near future.

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 8

Be SunSmart

WHY?

In Australia, sunburn can occur in less than 15 minutes on a fine January day. Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. This is mostly caused by over exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. The sun emits different types of radiation – visible light or sunlight that we see, infrared radiation (heat) that we feel, and ultraviolet (UV) radiation that can't be seen or felt.

A short term and painful effect of overexposure to UV radiation is sunburn. Longer term impacts of overexposure to the sun include premature aging and sunspots, and damage to eyesight. All types of sunburn, whether serious or mild, can cause permanent and irreversible skin damage. People of all ages are at risk of skin cancer, including babies and toddlers. However, most skin cancers can be prevented by adopting appropriate sun protection behaviour.

WHAT and HOW?

The *SunSmart UV Alert* is reported daily in newspaper weather forecasts across Australia. The alert identifies the times during the day that the UV index will reach 3 or above, as this is when sun protection is required.

Cancer Council Australia recommends when the UV Index is 3 or above, to use a combination of the following five sun protection measures:

1. *Slip* on sun-protective clothing - that covers as much skin as possible
2. *Slop* on SPF30+ sunscreen - broad spectrum and water resistant. Put on 20 mins before you go outdoors and every two hours after. Sunscreen shouldn't be used to extend time spent in the sun.
3. *Slap* on a hat - that protects your face, head, neck and ears
4. *Seek* shade
5. *Slide* on some sunglasses - make sure they meet Australian Standards.

Particular care should be taken between 10 am and 2 pm (11 am and 3 pm daylight saving time) when UV Index levels reach their peak. The Cancer Council Victoria recommends that babies under 12 months not be exposed to direct sunlight. A baby's skin is thin, extremely sensitive and can burn easily. The more sun exposure during childhood, the greater the risk of skin cancer in later life. When babies and toddlers are outside in Victoria from September to April, always use the five sun protection measures listed above.



For more information:
SunSmart:

www.sunsmart.com.au

The Ultraviolet (UV) index:
www.bom.gov.au/weather/uv/

CONTINUITY OF CARE

Partnerships

UHCHS, along with a range of individuals and organisations, has been involved in an integrated partnership to improve support to cancer patients. This Border Cancer Collaboration (BCC) was featured in the Australian Rural Doctor magazine in March 2008:

'Cancer patients from rural areas often lack access to care and poorer outcomes. Some key initiatives are helping to close the gaps in cancer care. So much has changed in the decade since medical oncologist Dr Craig Underhill moved to Albury-Wodonga. It is not simply that the people of this border region of south-west NSW and north-east Victoria, who previously relied on visiting specialists, now have access to a far greater range of cancer services. These include radiation therapy, three medical oncologists, multidisciplinary care and a clinical trials unit.

Just as importantly, patients' access to care is now determined by their need rather than their postcode or health insurance status, and they are no longer left to find their own way through a confusing maze of different services and providers. These gains have occurred because a coalition of locals, including doctors, service managers and community representatives, has had the will and the nous to break down the boundaries that once characterised the area – not only the geographic ones but also those between services and providers.

Dr Underhill, who has been closely involved in the Border Cancer Collaboration's evolution, is not alone in seeing it as a model for the development of other regional cancer centres of excellence. "The penny dropped that by collaborating it was far easier to achieve an improvement in services than any one facility could do on its own," says Dr Underhill, who believes the collaboration provides a model for improving health services generally, not only in the bush.

Critical elements of the Border Cancer Collaboration include the employment of care coordinators and agreements for staff from different services to be able to see patients, wherever they live or are being treated. For example, a social worker employed by a public hospital is able to see patients treated by a private hospital, which in turn freely provides the venue for educational meetings to public hospital staff.'

Manager of the BCC, Kathryn Josselyn, says critical factors in the collaboration's success include having clinical champions, a genuine commitment to collaboration, and senior health service executives on the steering committee. Basing the collaboration in the "neutral" territory of the UHCHS has also been important. "It makes all the stakeholders comfortable that the collaboration doesn't have an allegiance to a particular way of doing things." BCC was a finalist in the Victorian Healthcare Association Population Health awards in 2007.

Excerpt from 'Bridging the Gap' (M Sweet, Australian Rural Doctor, March 2008, pp. 8-12 & 14)

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 9

Positive parenting and healthy families

WHY?

Parenting is one of the most rewarding things you can do, but it can sometimes be a difficult job. We all want to create a family life for our children that is supportive and nurturing. For many adults, however, coping with the challenges of daily life as well as being a parent can sometimes seem overwhelming. A healthy family life is not only important to children's health and wellbeing, but also to your own.

WHAT and HOW?

Following are some simple tips on ways to keep family life 'healthy':

Make time for talking and listening

Children need to feel able to express a range of feelings such as joy, fear and happiness within the family environment. Encourage your children to talk about how they are feeling.

Listen to your children without cutting them off, criticizing what they say, or lecturing them.

Check that you are hearing your children correctly by repeating what you have heard, but in different words.

Use positive language

Everyone likes to be encouraged, especially children. Praise family members when appropriate, using phrases like:

- You did that really well
- I'm very proud of you
- You're so thoughtful
- Thanks for helping

Accept family members for who they are

Allow your children to be excited about their personal interests, and show respect and tolerance.

Take time to ask each family member what they did throughout the day and show interest in each other's lives.

Make family time

Find some way to spend time together as a family group. Set aside a day and time each week and do something special in this time.

Share mealtimes (without television or phone calls) to encourage everyone to talk whilst sharing the family meal.

Do things together that involve interaction with one another such as playing cards or games, walking together, or playing sport together.

Where to get help:

Upper Hume Community Health
Positive Parenting Telephone
Service: 1800 880 660
Parentline: 132 289



CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Embarking together on a learning journey

In 2007 the UHCHS young parents program was featured at the National Youth Affairs Conference in Melbourne with a presentation of two stories: the *Connecting Young Parents* (CYP) program, and one young woman's journey into parenthood.

For the previous two years, the CYP program had combined community development, youth development and health promotion principles to engage agencies and young people. The program's aim was to expand existing services, connect young people with services, expand social capital, strengthen young people's parenting skills, and create linkages for them with educational pathways.

The project has been highly successful. To achieve the aims of the project, staff have focused on listening and learning, developing respectful partnerships, identifying shared goals, and creating projects that meet diverse needs in different ways. The young people we work with are an integral part of this, and their information, networks, knowledge and experiences have informed our activities.

The presentation in Melbourne was one of the high points in our engagement with the young parents, and was one of the results of a two year journey in partnership with them through their parenting journeys. Our role in this work has been that of facilitator, building inclusion and collaboration. Our journey has been one of reflective practice, listening to others, and using what is learned today in what is done tomorrow. Through using these approaches, CYP and the parents we work with have become a dynamic driver, engaging and empowering young parents, and provide a launching point for further developments.



HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 10

Seek help and talk it over

WHY?

Sometimes we want a little time on our own if we are feeling down. However, if you are feeling sad, moody or low for long periods of time, are finding it hard to function day to day, or don't want to participate in the activities you usually do, then you may find it helpful to talk to someone who can help. If you know someone who is experiencing the symptoms mentioned above, you may want to offer some support.



WHAT and HOW?

If you think you need to talk to someone urgently, you can:

- Contact your doctor and ask for an emergency appointment
- Contact your local public hospital
- Call Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Call Suicide Helpline Victoria – 1300 651 251
- Kids Help Line (free call) – 1800 55 1800

Talking to someone about how you are feeling can be helpful. Trained professionals, such as counselors and psychologists, can help develop skills to deal with many stressful situations. You can find someone to help you by asking your doctor for a referral. Medicare now provides rebates if you are referred by your doctor to a registered psychologist.

In addition, the following can also help you feel better:

- Keep active – regular gentle exercise, preferably with others.
- Catch up with friends – keep in touch over the phone, or organise to meet and do something fun together.
- Keep active – plan to do one pleasurable activity every day. This may be reading, listening to music, watching movies, going to the beach or park, gardening, taking part in sport or seeing friends.

If you know someone that might need help, try the following tips:

- Talk to the person about how they are feeling
- Listen to what the person says. You don't need to offer an answer, sometimes just listening is helpful.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help from someone such as their doctor.

Where to get help:

Your doctor
Upper Hume Community Health
Service Counselling Team:
02 6022 8888
Beyond Blue:
www.beyondblue.org.au Beyond
Blue info line: 1300 22 4636

CONSUMER PARTICIPATION

Tai Chi

Tai Chi, which originated in China, combines slow, graceful movements with calm, regular breathing. It is very popular as a means of maintaining good health and relaxation and calmness. Some excellent volunteer Tai Chi leaders, Bill, Sheila and Rosemary, have been practising their art with a group of local residents for the past six years in an UHCHS program. The group meets twice weekly in the mornings - in winter at the Centro Plaza Wodonga and in summer in Les Stone Park Wodonga.

Tai Chi participants' testimonies:

"Tai Chi gives me a gentle workout incorporating every muscle in my body; my problems have disappeared over the years." (Berta, 56 yrs)

"I loved walking down to the creek every morning but I didn't think it was enough to keep me fit; I tried the gym, I found it too harsh. I needed something gentler on my body. Discovering Tai Chi was perfect. I can't think of life without Tai Chi." (Sheila, 74 yrs)

"A friend introduced me to Tai Chi, as the exercise class I was attending was too much for my neck, shoulders and arms. I couldn't sleep at night from the pain. Since joining Tai Chi I've found my body is much more relaxed and my mind more alert. Long live our wonderful group and the art of Tai Chi." (Gwen Z, 69 yrs)

"I have always been an average fit person. In my early 60's I noticed I was finding it difficult to tie my shoelaces and my body seemed to be stiffening up. I attended Tai Chi and noticed a general loosening up of my muscles plus the breathing helped reduce the tension in me. I felt good!" (Margaret M, 66 yrs)

"Over the years I have found a great benefit from Tai Chi. I find my joint movements become more fluid and pain to be practically non-existent. As I live alone all the above is very life filling. The volunteer leaders are to be much admired for their unselfish efforts." (Margaret F, 80 yrs)

"Prior to Tai Chi my wife and I visited the gym. These sessions were strenuous exercises pumping iron etc and on leaving I would feel 'shattered'. I can honestly say that I have never looked back, I feel better after half an hour of Tai Chi than after an hour of punishment at the gym. The benefits I get from Tai Chi are both physical and mental. The longer I can stave off ageing problems the longer I will continue this gentle exercise." (Bill, 76 yrs)

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 11

Sleep well

WHY?

Getting good quality sleep is important to maintaining good health. Good quality sleep isn't necessarily long sleep – it is having 'deep sleep'. This is the sleep that occurs during the first five hours after falling asleep. However, many people find they are not getting enough deep sleep and, as a result, feel tired, lethargic and irritable. You can improve your sleep quality by making some changes to your lifestyle.

WHAT and HOW?

The following are some suggestions to help improve your quality of sleep:

Listen to your body clock

Your body's sleep-wake cycle is controlled by an internal 'clock' in the brain. Getting a good sleep means working with your body clock. Ways to do this include:

- Get up at the same time each day. This will help your body to get into a routine.
- If you are tired, go to bed. Ignoring sleepiness will make it more difficult to fall asleep later.
- Not going to bed if you aren't tired. Do a quiet activity instead, such as listening to calm music or have a bath.

Improve your sleeping environment

- Make sure your room is not too hot or too cold and is dark enough.
- Wear a pair of earplugs if you are distracted by noise.
- Try not to watch television, use a computer, or talk on the phone in your bedroom these are stimulating, rather than relaxing activities.

Avoid drugs

- Cigarettes keep you awake for longer as nicotine is a stimulant.
- Alcohol may help you fall asleep but it can also disrupt your sleep patterns, so you are likely to still feel tired the next morning.
- Sleeping pills may initially be helpful but only mask the cause of sleeping problems.

Relax

Insomnia (sleeplessness) is often caused by worrying. Suggestions include:

- If you worry before going to bed, try scheduling yourself a half hour of 'worry time' a few hours before bed. It may help to write your worries down in a notebook. Keep the notebook beside your bed so that if you wake with a new worry you can write it down.
- Try relaxation exercises.



CLIENT STORIES

Get Together House – Participants' Reflections

The Mural

"Circles, squares, hearts, beaded butterflies, jungle scenes and much more featured on a mural made over eleven weeks by an enthusiastic, peer-lead, group of Get Together House participants. Each participant produced their own panel, as well as working together on the jungle scenes. It was very enjoyable to be able to sit outside around a table and not only contribute to the creative process, but have a cuppa and a chat at the same time. The three-part mural is soon to be on permanent display in the UHCHS foyer so that members of the public can enjoy it, but there have already been many favourable comments received from staff members."

Youth Mentoring

"I have been given the opportunity to be a mentor to others in the GROOVERS program. I found GROOVERS to be a supportive and inspirational environment in which I was free to learn without being judged for where I was at. I had the opportunity to try new things and find things that I enjoyed and was good at. The program meant discovering that I did have strengths and abilities. I now share what worked or didn't work for me and communicate with the other participants on a level where we have mutual understanding. I believe that it is important for people to see that recovery is possible. This may not mean being 100%, 100% of the time, but demonstrating the skills I learned at GROOVERS and putting them into practice to reduce the impact on my everyday life."



10K Club

"The bike riding program gives me the opportunity to get out and do some good healthy physical activity with friends from GT House. Wodonga has great cycle paths and we now know most of them. We generally ride for about 10km and visit a cafe half way through the ride. My daughter and son are long distance runners and I sometimes ride with them when they are training. My biggest achievements involving the group have been presenting a talk on the benefits of cycling to an international conference, and when I rode 106km with eight other people to complete the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail Ride."

HEALTH PROMOTION MESSAGE 12

Take time to breath deeply and relax

WHY?

When we are trying to cope with situations or demands that are greater than our ability to cope with them, we tend to get stressed. Although stress is not always a bad thing, it does become a problem when it negatively affects our wellbeing.

Stress can affect us in a variety of ways, including:

- Our emotional state – feeling anxious, tense, angry, depressed
- Our physical state – increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, shallow breathing
- Our state of mind – being forgetful, having poor concentration
- Our behaviour – drinking and smoking more, sleeping poorly, gaining or losing weight

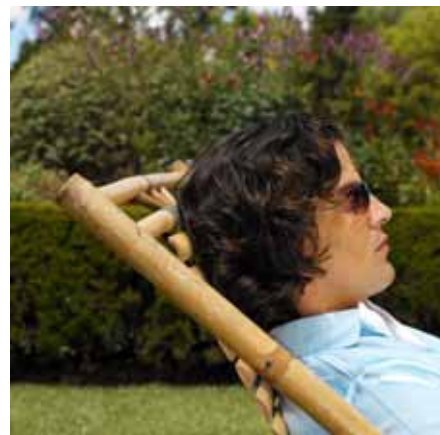
WHAT and HOW?

There are a variety of ways to manage stress levels including:

- Putting the cause of stress in perspective - Even if you are powerless to change the source of stress, you have control over how you choose to respond to it.
- Making a plan – write out a plan with achievable goals and a time line for reaching them. If you plan ahead you may not have to cope with as much stress later on.
- Eating well – as tempting as they are, foods high in fat and sugar can make you feel worse once the sugary 'high' has worn off. Instead, choose fresh foods and drink plenty of water.
- Relaxing regularly – take some time each day to do something pleasant and reminds you to enjoy life.
- Breathing deeply – we tend to breathe shallowly when we are stressed. To relax, it is helpful to learn how to breathe deeply.

Where to get help:

Your doctor
Upper Hume Community Health
Service: 02 6022 8888



Remember: we can go months without food and days without water, but only minutes without air!

CLIENT STORIES

Gambler's Help

"If you think you've got a gambling problem go and talk to someone about it, because, one, it helps the bank balance and, two, there are usually a lot of underlying issues in there as well."

Excerpt from an interview with a client

Client: *"It actually started down in Melbourne going to the casino with friends. I went along there a couple of times. I really wasn't interested in the beginning but after a few weeks I ended up hooked on the machines. And from there I moved up here a few years ago and it's just escalated from there, so that's basically how it started; it's very easy to start I think. You just walk into the venue and start putting money in and you get hooked. When I was doing the Friday and Saturday nights at the casino I probably got there at about six o'clock in the evening and I was usually walking out of there as the sun was coming up. I was actually taking time off work to go and play the poker machines which is not a good situation."*

Interviewer: *"What was it that brought you to the point where you said enough is enough, I've got to make a change here?"*

Client: *"Yes, the time for me was when I had a Visa bill of \$13, 000. I had a whole pile of bills sitting on the bench and a zero bank balance with no way to pay them. That was when I thought I have to do something about this. It took me a while after that to actually do it, but that was the catalyst for me. It wasn't the first time I'd had a Visa bill of that amount. I've actually had to pay it out by re mortgaging my house. I was paying off a car and a house and I nearly lost both, so it gets a bit devastating in that predicament. I wish I hadn't done that. But you can't turn the clock back. I can see the light now, obviously."*

Interviewer: *"Have you ever stopped to think how much you spent over that five or six years?"*

Client: *"I estimate it's in the vicinity of over \$200,000, a lot of money. I could have paid my house and a car off!"*

Interviewer: *"You did eventually go for help to Gambler's Help Counselling Service. They obviously were a help?"*

Client: *"Very much so — I wouldn't have got to the point that I am now without help. I initially tried to work things out myself. I got self-exclusion which is one of the options that gamblers can do in all of the venues. I went to each of the venues and took a letter and a photograph and said 'Please exclude me from your venue'."*

Interviewer: *"You're a reformed problem gambler. Is the lure, the temptation, still there?"*

Client: *"Ah yes it's still there. In fact on Saturday when I was feeling rather depressed I drove past a few venues but I've got to the point now where I can switch that part off in my brain and say 'No. that's not what I want'."*

Interviewer: *"One of the ways that you've found helpful in overcoming this is a support group that operates and you'd like other people to become involved in that as well?"*

Client: *"Yes for sure. Well, there are two things that I did. Firstly I got counselling through Gambler's Help at the Upper Hume Community Health Centre. They put me in touch with a men's support group which I've been attending for two years every Wednesday night which really helped me and then I started running a gambling support group myself. I thought, well, seeing as I can kick the habit maybe I can help other people do it so that's been running now since November last year and seems to be going reasonably well."*

Interviewer: *"I guess your plea to other people in the situation you've been in would be to seek help? It's easy for me to say..."*

Client: *"It's easy for you to say and it's very easy for me to say and until a person is ready to seek help they won't do it but, yes, do ask for help. If you think you've got a gambling problem go and talk to someone about it because, one, it helps the bank balance and, two, there are usually a lot of underlying issues for people as well - that's often the reason they've got into trouble and that was the same with me - I had other issues which were causing me to gamble. Yes, do something about it."*

Since this interview the client has been participating in *Insight* on SBS talking about his experience with gambling. He has an active role in the UHCHS Men's Support Group.