



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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Permanent
Care and
Adoptive
Families



QUICK LINKS

**Journal Club -
Last 2021 Topic
2/12/21**

**Click & Connect -
Santa & Clowns -
Fear or Fun
1/12/21**



Youtube Recording - Congruent Caregiving & Coregulating Therapy



Helen Barrett is a registered play therapist, clinical social worker, counsellor and certified filial therapist with a trauma history of her own.

When Helen found play therapy, she realised the positive impact it could have in affecting change in children with a language that they already know very well. Play! Children recreate the difficult or traumatic experiences they are grappling with and they look to the therapist for coregulation and a corrective experience.

Play therapy is an emotions focussed intervention that suits anxious tendencies, trauma, perfectionism, anger and acting out behaviours. **Play therapy metabolises the trauma to move it out of the right brain so children can create a new narrative and widen their window of tolerance.**

Helen also explains how being congruent is important. **If you are feeling anxious or angry, but pretending not to be, your child will see that and feel that something is not right, creating even more threat for the child, exacerbating even bigger emotions.** Helen wants parents to be conscious of their own narrative and how that impacts the parent-child relationship too. This is why she offers filial play therapy where the parent learns to be the therapist. Psychoeducation with positive and efficient outcomes! To learn more, listen to the Youtube Recording [here](#)

"Delivering trauma-informed services that empower"

News - CEO

Amanda Bresnan, our Interim CEO, has completed her contract with PCA Families and will be moving on to a new role. Kris Peach will be stepping down from the Board to act in the CEO role until Lisa Milani returns.

The PCA Families Board thanks Amanda for helping convince government to outsource the administration of Homestretch to PCA Families, preparing our 2022/23 government budget bid, overcoming the Covid-19 impacts on our flexible funding program delivery, strengthening our key stakeholder relationships and building a collaborative team.



Journal Club - Equine and Animal Assisted Therapies

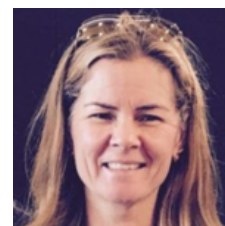


Please join us at 8pm on **Thursday December 2** by [registering here](#)

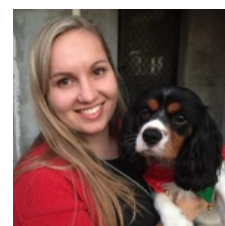
Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a type of therapy that involves animals as a form of treatment and has been shown to have a number of positive benefits. The goal of AAT is to improve a person's social and emotional functioning.

Join psychologists Leanne Winter and Shelby Bengtsson from Mullum Road Clinic who specialise in animal therapies to talk about the benefits and power of animal therapy.

Leanne grew up in a family with members on the spectrum and then had a child who was on the spectrum. This inspired her to enter psychology to find ways to assist other families with similar experiences. Leanne's passion has always been animals and the idea of involving animals in therapy, particularly horses and dogs, was a concept she entertained for many years. She is now fortunate to be able to combine two of her passions, ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) and AAT (Animal Assisted Therapy).



Shelby is a psychologist with experience working with children, adolescents, and adults with a range of mental health problems. Shelby is competent in the assessment and diagnosis of a range of mental health disorders and has worked with individuals and groups using Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Exposure Therapy, **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and Mindfulness.**



"Improving the lived experience of young people"

News - Living Learning

School while ideal does not suit everyone, so it pays to be aware that there are options. The Living Learning Program at Melbourne City Mission is one option that supports children with mental health conditions, with learning and wellbeing at the core, based on the Hester Hornbrook Academy model. To find out more about Living Learning see [here](#) or to learn more about Hester Academy see [here](#)

Click and Connect - Santa & Clowns, Fear or Fun

Please join us at midday on **Wednesday 1 December by registering [here](#)**. What do you do if you fear Santa (Santaphobia) or clowns (Coulrophobia)? Trauma can exacerbate the response to these fears. Find out what you can do and share your experience with like minded caregivers.

WHERE: Please register in advance via Zoom link above

Each Wednesday fortnight various parents and carers come together on Zoom to learn from each other and share their challenges and lived experience in our Click and Connect meetings. We share the joys and the struggles and find new ways to tackle situations. All welcome!

Flexi-Funds

A reminder that PCA Families has Flexible Funding available to meet the extraordinary needs of children and young people subject to a Permanent Care Order, or where you are receiving DFFH care allowance and have a Family Court Order or Special Needs Adoption Order.

Flexi funds can be used for therapeutic, educational and medical services, to build skills, interests or attachment, to elevate family contact and cultural identity, to offer respite, home medication or other services like whitegoods, one off clothing, estate planning or vehicle needs eg car seats.

[For details about what the funds can be used for - see here](#)

PCA Families cannot guarantee we are able to fund every application and request received.

PCA Families access to COVID-19 funding support will cease at the end of 2021.

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Living Learning: How is it different?
We recognise that good mental health is a key facilitator of effective learning. Students' mental health and wellbeing receives the same focus and resources as their academic learning.

- MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING**
Neuropsychologist, Counsellors, Psychologists and Psychiatric support all available when needed.
- YOUTH WORKER IN CLASS**
All Living Learning classes are staffed by a full time youth worker and educator, with additional management available on site for support.
- OTHER SUPPORT PROVIDED**
Care navigation provided - Key Worker to coordinate supports which address barriers to student participation. Ensures student attendance and progress. Other supports may include homelessness, family issues, alcohol and other drugs, etc. Program brokerage available if further funding is needed.
- SPECIALIST EDUCATION SUPPORT (E.G. FOR DYSLLEXIA, ADHD, ETC.)**
Specialist educators provide individual support according to needs of each student.
- TEACHERS**
A single stable educator to student relationship is built with specialists joining in as needed. The student learns to work well with one educator.
- PHYSICAL HEALTH PROGRAM**
Regularly visiting nurse, doctors' appointments and dentistry funded through the program. Education about using the publicly available health services integrated into education model.
- FLEXIBLE, PRACTICAL AND STUDENT-LED CURRICULUM**
Students work at their own pace, developing core literacy and numeracy skills through practical projects aligned to their interests and future career aspirations.

Find out more about Living Learning:
mcm.org.au/learning/livinglearning
livinglearning@mcm.org.au
1800 517 218

