



**Message from Brenda  
Welcome to PCA Families  
Thrive Autumn edition**

I am pleased to announce that Metro Trains have chosen PCA Families for a children’s event in early June or July. They are offering ten children aged 10-12 years an opportunity to be a train driver for half a day. The children will be taken to the Metro Academy in Kensington where they will be able to drive trains via the new train simulators (see picture below). Children will also receive a show bag. More information will follow but if you think your child would be interested, please contact Deb at our office on [Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au).



In addition, Zoos Victoria have provided PCA Families with zoo passes to Melbourne, Werribee and Healesville zoos which are valid until early December (each pass admits two adults and two children). We have 100 passes to give away; to secure your pass, please email [Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au) with your postal address and we will send you a pass.

This edition is jam packed with training opportunities. We have been modifying our Life Story Work training package for parents, carers, and professionals. I cannot stress how important Life Story Work is to children and young people’s identity and cultural connection.

You will also see that we are advertising Carer Kafe training; while this training is targeted at kinship carers and foster carers, you have also been invited to register if interested. Let us know if you have any difficulty in registering.



We sadly said farewell to Minister Jenny Mikakos after the election last year. She was instrumental in ensuring that we had funding for the Permanent Carers Helpline and Flexible Funds. Our new Minister is Luke Donnellan and we are meeting him in early April to discuss the work of PCA Families as well as the government’s future commitment to our work and families.

In the next edition, I will be updating you on the work we are doing with DHHS and other peak organisations around a state-wide carer strategy and longitudinal study, as well as changes to adoption.

PCA Families has a facebook page too, so please like and follow us for regular updates <https://www.facebook.com/pcafamilies/>

*Kind Regards*

Brenda Carmen - CEO

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# Bulletin

## Journal Club – Special Guest, David Rose– LOOKOUT centres

Date: March 7th, 2019

Time: 7.30 - 9:30pm (early start)

Guest speaker: **David Rose, Principal of the LOOKOUT Centre for the North Eastern Region**

Topic: LOOKOUT Centres - Improving Educational Outcomes for Students in permanent care

Location: Collingwood Library,  
11 Stanton Street, Abbotsford

Phone: 03 9020 1833

RSVP: info@pcafamilies.org.au

LOOKOUT Centres were first established in 2017 to help schools implement their obligations in the Out of Home Care Partnering Agreement (OOHCPA).

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/health/PartneringAgreement.pdf>

# What's on

Tuesday March 5

5.20pm – 6.15pm

**Mindfulness in Motion**

Thursday March 7

10.00am – 11.30pm

**Peer support – Warrnambool**

Thursday March 7

7.30pm – 9.30pm (early start)

**Journal Club – Special Guest, David Rose**

Tuesday March 12

5.20pm – 6.15pm

**Mindfulness in Motion**

Wednesday March 13

11.30pm – 1.00pm

**Peer support – Morwell**

Tuesday March 19

5.20pm – 6.15pm

**Mindfulness in Motion**

Thursday March 21

9.00am – 1.00pm

**Life Story Work for professionals—CBD**

Saturday March 23

10.00am – 2.00pm

**Life Story Work for parents & carers - CBD**

Tuesday March 26

5.20pm – 6.15pm

**Mindfulness in Motion**

Monday April 1

11.30am – 1.00pm

**Peer support – Bendigo**

Thursday April 4

8.00pm – 9.30pm

**Journal Club – Collingwood**

Wednesday May 1

1.00am – 5.00pm

**Life Story Work for professionals—CBD**

Thursday May 2

8.00pm – 9.30pm

**Journal Club – Collingwood**

Sunday May 5

10.00am – 2.00pm

**Life Story Work for parents & carers - CBD**

Tuesday May 7

11.30pm – 1.00pm

**Peer support – Horsham**

Friday May 17

11.30pm – 1.00pm

**Peer support – Morwell**

Friday May 31

10.30pm – 12.30pm

**Peer support – Shepparton**

# Parenting tip

## Why Caregivers Need Self-Compassion

Many of us are caregivers, whether we have a special-needs child, a parent with Alzheimer's, an ill partner, or are in a caregiving profession such as being a nurse, therapist, or teacher.



When the stress of continually being there for others is high, we can become overwhelmed by our caregiving responsibilities and run the risk of burning out. The recommendation typically given for caregivers is to engage in self-care strategies such as drawing emotional boundaries between ourselves and those who rely on us (okay for professionals but not so easy with loved ones).

Self-care can also take the form of meeting our own needs for relaxation, social support, and healthy living (wonderful advice, but only possible in our downtime and not when we're in the actual presence of the person we're caring for). What is discussed less often is how to remain in the presence of suffering without being overwhelmed. This is where compassion steps in.

Although the term "compassion fatigue" is well-known, some psychologists are starting to argue that the term should be changed to "**empathy fatigue.**" to continue reading this article click on the link <https://self-compassion.org/why-caregivers-need-self-compassion/>

# Outreach and peer support



We have many forms of support and play groups scattered around Melbourne and regional Victoria, including; Collingwood, Bendigo, Ballarat, Shepparton, Horsham and Morwell. People gather for shared learning and talk about some of the challenges of raising children. Learning and support occurs around parenting our children and the opportunity to build relationships with others.

Our support groups are friendly and welcoming and are open to all parents; adoptive, permanent care and kinship care. You can also arrange a one-on-one appointment by calling the office on 9020 1833 if required.

## Outreach and peer support in your area

We will be in your area on the dates below. If you would like an individual appointment, please contact PCA Families on 9020 1833.



### TOPIC: Identifying support for your family

#### Warrnambool - *Brenda*

**Date:** Thursday 7 March  
**Time:** 10.00am – 11.30pm  
**Venue:** RSL , Corner Merri and Liebig Streets, Warrnambool

#### Morwell - *Alannah*

**Date:** Wednesday, March 13  
**Time:** 11.30pm – 1.00pm  
**Venue:** Morwell Library, 63-65 Elgin Street

#### Bendigo - *Alannah*

**Date:** Monday 1 April  
**Time:** 11.30am – 1.00pm  
**Venue:** Bendigo Library , 259 Hargreaves St

#### Horsham - *Alannah*

**Date:** Tuesday, May 7  
**Time:** 11.30pm – 1.00pm  
**Venue:** To be advised

#### Morwell - *Alannah*

**Date:** Friday, May 17  
**Time:** 11.30pm – 1.00pm  
**Venue:** Morwell Library, 63-65 Elgin Street

#### Shepparton - *Brenda Carmen—CEO*

**Date:** Friday, May 31  
**Time:** 10.30pm – 12.30pm  
**Venue:** Venue TBA

#### Ballarat - *Alannah*

**Date:** Friday June 7  
**Time:** 11.30am – 1.00pm  
**Venue:** Ballarat Library, 178 Doveton Street North

**At the end of the group session, Alannah will be available for individual consults if required**

## Practice response to child sexual exploitation

*Children and young people in all living placement types may be at risk of being sexually exploited - however young people living in out of home care are particularly vulnerable. It is vital that those who work with this vulnerable population have a strong knowledge of the dynamics of sexual exploitation and gain awareness of police disruption strategies to effectively target and manage child sexual exploitation.*

### An important joint training opportunity.

This training will be delivered by the Office of Professional Practice, DHHS, in conjunction with the Victoria Police. It is an opportunity for residential workers and supervisors, CSO staff, DHHS and Police to learn and work together to best address this important issue.

### Aim of training

During this training you will gain knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- understanding what constitutes sexual exploitation (including models of exploitation, the role of technology in exploitation, organised versus opportunistic sexual exploitation)
- redefining how we view young people's involvement in sexually exploitative situations ("prostitution" versus sexual exploitation)
- signs of sexual exploitative situations
- how to respond (what is my role in addressing sexual exploitation, what can I do when I suspect sexual exploitation)?
- where do I fit into the systems response to child sexual exploitation?

In addition to the above, this training will also look at the current interagency responses to sexual exploitation, and discuss innovative practices being employed to disrupt sexual exploitation.

Current international best practice and innovations are also considered.

The training aims to be presented within an interactive framework. Audience participation is both encouraged and welcomed.

**Date:** Wednesday 20 March 2019

**Time:** 9am to 3.30pm

**Venue:** Quality Hotel Mildura Grand, Seventh St, Mildura

**Cost:** Free

**RSVP:** <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/events/rlds-practice-response-to-child-sexual-exploitation-cse-mildura/>

## Life Story Work for professionals working in sector



Learn how *Life Story Work* can be used by parents and carers as therapeutic tool to use with children. *Life Story Work* begins a healing journey with children, helping them understand their past and present while providing resources to move on into the future.

At the session you will explore

- Current research and thinking on *Life Story Work* and the role it can take in family life
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories
- An invaluable 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities, and
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving.

Young people and children in Kinship Care, Foster Care, Permanent Care and Adoptive families often require additional guidance from the adults in their lives to ensure they have opportunities to record their history.

**Date** Thursday March 21  
**Time** 9.00am—1.00pm—morning tea provided  
**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne  
**Cost** \$115.00 inc. GST (to arrange an invoice, please email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au)  
**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/ZUMI>

**Date** Wednesday May 1  
**Time** 1.00pm —5.00pm — afternoon tea provided  
**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne  
**Cost** \$115.00 inc. GST (to arrange an invoice, please email Deborah@pcfamilies.org.au)  
**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/ZUMI>

## Life Story Work for parents and carers



Develop another therapeutic tool to use with your children. Learn how to begin a journey with your child towards helping them understand the past and present while providing resources to move on into the future. Discover how to enhance your child's reflection and problem-solving skills.

At this training, you will learn about:

- Current research and thinking on *Life Story Work* and the role it can take in family life
- The opportunity to explore, in a practical way, how to create and use life stories
- An invaluable 'toolbox' of suggested strategies and activities, and
- Shared learning, reflection and problem-solving skills.

**Date** Saturday March 23  
**Time** 10.00am—2.00pm  
**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne  
**Cost** \$60.00—including light lunch  
**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/ZUMD>

**Date** Sunday May 5  
**Time** 10.00am—2.00pm  
**Venue** PCA Families, Level 5, 50 Market Street, Melbourne  
**Cost** \$60.00—including light lunch  
**RSVP** <https://www.trybooking.com/ZUMG>



## Learning & Development Guide

### MARCH

#### Emotional Intelligence

Noble Park—7 March: Day

#### Being Heard: Communication in the Care System

Eaglemont—12 March: Day

#### Divided Loyalties

Geelong—14 March: Day

Ballarat—28 March: Day

#### Understanding & responding to adolescent drug or alcohol uses

Warrnambool—16 March: Day

#### Family Violence: The Real Impact on Children

Dandenong—20 August: Day

#### Why do they do that? Understanding & responding to behaviour in young children 9–18 years of age

Wodonga—20 & 21 March: Day

Sunshine—30 & 31st March: Day

#### Thinking Mind, Reptilian Brain

Sale—21 March: Day

#### An Introduction to Mental Health

Kilsyth—27 March: Evening

### APRIL

#### Child Sexual Abuse & Trauma

Mount Helen—1 April: Day

Warrnambool—30 April: Day

#### Regulating Aggressive and Violent Emotions

Geelong—1 April: Day

#### Family Violence: The Real Impact on Children

Sale—2 April: Day

#### Caring for Young People Who Self Harm

Warrnambool—2 April: Day

Box Hill—4 April: Evening

Wodonga—6 April: Day

#### Emotional Intelligence

Dandenong—3 April: Evening

#### Nikara's Journey

Mildura—3 & 4 April: Day

Shepparton—3 & 4 April: Day

### April Continued...

#### Why do they do that? Understanding & responding to behaviour in young children 0–8 years of age

Broadmeadows—3 & 4 April: Evening

#### Divided Loyalties

Heywood—5 April: Day

Bendigo—29 April: Day

#### Bringing Up Great Kids in Kinship

Mildura—23 & 24 April: Day

### MAY

#### Fostering Resilience

Mildura—7 May: Day

Frankston—8 May: Day

Warragul—10 May: Day

#### Understanding Risk Taking in Adolescence

Werribee—9 May: Day

#### Thinking Mind, Reptilian Brain

Shepparton—10 May: Day

#### Divided Loyalties

Wodonga—11 May: Day

#### Nikara's Journey

Noble Park—14 & 15 May: Day

#### Why do they do that? Understanding & responding to behaviour in young children 0–8 years of age

Geelong—15 & 16 May: Day

#### 9–18 years of age

Dandenong—21 & 22 May: Day

Sunshine—25 & 26 May: Day

#### Regulating Aggressive & Violent Emotions

Sale—23 & 24 May: Day

#### Love of Learning

Broadmeadow—23 May: Day

For more information, visit:

[https://carerkafe.org.au/images/Carer\\_KaFE\\_2019\\_Calendar.pdf](https://carerkafe.org.au/images/Carer_KaFE_2019_Calendar.pdf)

# Youth Programs

## TERM 2 dates

Tuesdays 5.20—6.15pm

May 7, 14, 21, 28

June 4, (not on 11), 18,

mindfulness  
in motion



The *Mindfulness in Motion Kids Program* is designed specifically to assist young peoples' personal growth. Classes blend skill development, personal observation and experiential learning in an environment that is fun, supportive and engaging for young people.

Classes focus on acquiring:

- Resilience
- Focus
- Teamwork
- Assertiveness
- Emotional regulation
- Self-reflection
- Body awareness

**We are continuing the Mindfulness in Motion program in term 1 in 2019. Flexi funding can cover the cost if your child is on a permanent care order and ICAV will cover the cost if you child is intercountry adopted. Children not in either of these categories are asked to pay \$100 towards the cost of the program.**

The classes run **Tuesday** evenings on the dates listed below.

**Age limit** 5 - 12 years old

**Time:** 5.20 – 6.15pm

**Dates:** **TERM 2**  
May 7, 14, 21, 28  
June 4, 18 (not on 11 June)

**Address:** Mindfulness in Motion, 6 Oakover Road, Preston

**Cost:** **free of charge to permanent care and intercountry adopted children**  
\$100.00 per child otherwise. <https://www.trybooking.com/ZUMO>

**To register:** contact Deborah on [Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au](mailto:Deborah@pcafamilies.org.au) or call 9020 1839

### Your Instructors:

Guy Rhynsburger is the senior instructor at Mindfulness in Motions, with over 20 year's martial arts experience. Guy has been working with young people from a variety of backgrounds teaching life skills for well over 15 years.

*All instructors have a current Working with Children Check and police check.*



# Education and Youth

**Raising Expectations supports care leavers to pursue higher education and university.**

**Education Guide for Carers of Children Living in Out-of-Home Care in Victoria** is now available on the Centre's website <https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/education-guide-for-carers-of-children-living-in-out-of-home-care-in-victoria/>



This guide, developed by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, provides carers, workers and practitioners with information about the supports and services to assist them and the children in their care to be connected and engaged in their education and to know where to go to get the support they need when they need it. The Centre acknowledges the contribution of the Department of Education and Training, VAEAI and carer agencies to the guide.

Fostering a love of learning and having high educational expectations and aspirations for all children and young people is vital. Actively supporting their learning, development and education will help to prepare and position them for a fulfilling, rewarding and positive life. Collectively, we can make sure all children and young people in care are supported to achieve in education from pre-school through to vocational and tertiary education, including university.

## Cyber safety

Following on from the February Journal club regarding Cyber Safety here is some information that you may find helpful.

- Cyber safety can be complicated, but protecting your family is simple.
- You want peace of mind when they're online, no matter what device the kids are using and no matter where they're using it.
- Every device protected. Everywhere.



Cyber Experts will create cyber safety settings tailored to your family and provide you with ongoing advice on the latest apps, websites and online risks to help you stay on top of cyber safety.

Here is the link <https://www.familyzone.com/au/>

## Mental Health and Schooling

**Annual Winston Rickards Memorial Oration: "Mental Health and Schooling - The Educational Challenge"**

Mental Health for Young and their Families (MHYF) Vic. is a collaborative partnership between mental health and other health professionals, service users and the general public.

MHYF aims to promote mental health in children, reduce stigma, advocate, resource, and collaborate and is hosting the 2019 Winston Rickards Memorial Oration.

Date: Monday March 18  
Time: 7.30pm  
Where: Ella Latham Lecture Theatre of the Royal Children's Hospital  
RSVP: [admin@mhyfvic.org](mailto:admin@mhyfvic.org)

The oration is titled: "Mental Health and Schooling - The Educational Challenge" and will be given by Professor Field Rickards, and Drs Lisa McKay-Brown and Peggy Kern.



# Flexible Funding

## States schools relief

All Victorian government schools provide assistance through **State Schools' Relief (SSR)**. SSR funds can assist with school uniforms, school shoes and textbooks. You will need to make a time to speak with your school's Principal, Assistant Principal or School Welfare Co-ordinator. They can discuss with you your eligibility and submit a request to SSR on your behalf.

**Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF)** is available to government and non-government schools with financial assistance for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Funds are available to families and carers:

- ◆ holding means-tested concession cards
- ◆ on bridging or temporary protection visas
- ◆ in community detention
- ◆ with students in out of home care
- ◆ with students in statutory care.
- ◆ Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from [www.education.vic.gov.au/csef](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/csef)

We appreciate your support in exploring the above options for assistance but please, do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your needs and submit a Flexible Funding application for your child/young person's educational needs.

## PCA Families



Permanent Care and Adoptive Families (PCA Families) Helpline can assist with a variety of queries in relation to permanent care and adoption.

We have professionals available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm with an understanding of legal, financial, educational and psychological issues.

Our staff have professional and lived experience of the reality of caring for children who come from out of home care and can support you to access appropriate trauma informed services, either from our database or by researching your area. Where needed, our staff can support you to educate your child's school in trauma sensitive schooling, and advocate on your behalf to build a community of trauma sensitive understanding and support around your child.

We endeavour to respond to your call within 48 hours.

We also have **flexible funding** which you can apply for by calling our office during business hours

9.00am—5.00pm Monday to Friday. T: 03 9020 1833 or E: [info@pcfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@pcfamilies.org.au)

✓ **medical**    ✓ **education**    ✓ **therapies**    ✓ **respite**    ✓ **transport**    ✓ **cultural connection.**

*PCA Families has zero tolerance of child abuse and we are committed to establishing and maintaining child safe environments*

