



*Farewell
Dr Fruit-Loop...
Page 6*

In this Issue

September 2014

- Farewell Dr Fruit-Loop... - Page 3
- HarbisonCare's Role with Dr Peter Spitzer - Page 4
- National Workshop Programme News- Page 5
- Latrobe Workshop- Page 6
- Minister Ajaka launches NSW Carers Strategy - Page 7
- Members Articles: Bastille Day Celebration - Page 9
- Journal Watch / Web Watch - Page 10
- From the Editor - Page 11

**Adelaide
Conference -
ready to go -
be quick and
we can squeeze
you in!**



President's Piece

Hello Members,

Most of you will be aware of the recent passing of Dr. Peter Spitzer, also known to many as Dr. Fruit-Loop. Dr. Spitzer was the co-founder and medical director of The Humour Foundation and within that role had a close relationship with DTA.

Last year, DTA entered into negotiations with The Humour Foundation in developing a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations. Quite a few of you attended the workshop facilitated by Peter prior to the 2013 Conference in Sydney. At that time, the DTA Board was involved in strategic planning, and I recall with fondness, the pleas of Board members to be able to be released from that meeting and to be able to sit in on Peter's workshop.

Personally, I met with Peter on several occasions in discussing how the DTA and The Humour Foundation relationship might look, and each time found him to be a very caring, compassionate man, dedicated to spreading the word on the health benefits of humour. My thoughts go to his family and co-workers at this time.

The 2014 Conference planning has moved into full production. A very dedicated team in Adelaide are very busy, and thanks to the support of the DTA office, everything is falling into place neatly. We are very proud and excited that a contingent of Japanese DT members and also members from the Society of New Zealand Diversional Therapists are attending this year's conference.

For those of you attending, please take the time to chat with our overseas friends. Having met with Takako (President DT Japan) and having attended the 2013 Society of New Zealand Diversional Therapists Conference, I can attest to the passion and dedication of these groups. They will love to hear about your work and the brilliant programs you are involved in.

How many of you are bringing your husbands/partners along to the Conference? This year, we are trialling a new concept - Men on Buses. The day program sounds fantastic and I have no doubt the group of men will have a brilliant time! If you haven't already considered this, perhaps rethink - bring your bloke along, and have a few days touring Adelaide either before or after the Conference! Airfares and accommodation are cheaper, so it's a great way to combine work and pleasure in amazing surroundings!

As we move into the second half of 2014, the November AGM looms. This year, there are several positions available on your Board. I would implore each of you to consider your own involvement in the peak body representing the Diversional Therapist and Diversional Therapy role. I can speak confidently in saying any involvement in DTA will be exciting, and will support you in your chosen career path. I believe the future for DTA will involve change, resulting from growth and evolution. Any change also heralds motivation and stimulation, and supports personal development. If you are excited by this, then please, make the bold move and put your hand up to be part of your Board or perhaps one of the Portfolios. You can read more on this later in the newsletter.

I look forward to meeting many of you in Adelaide, and am happy to chat further with you if you have any questions about being part of your peak body,

Regards
Louise Absalom
President DTA

Reminder!

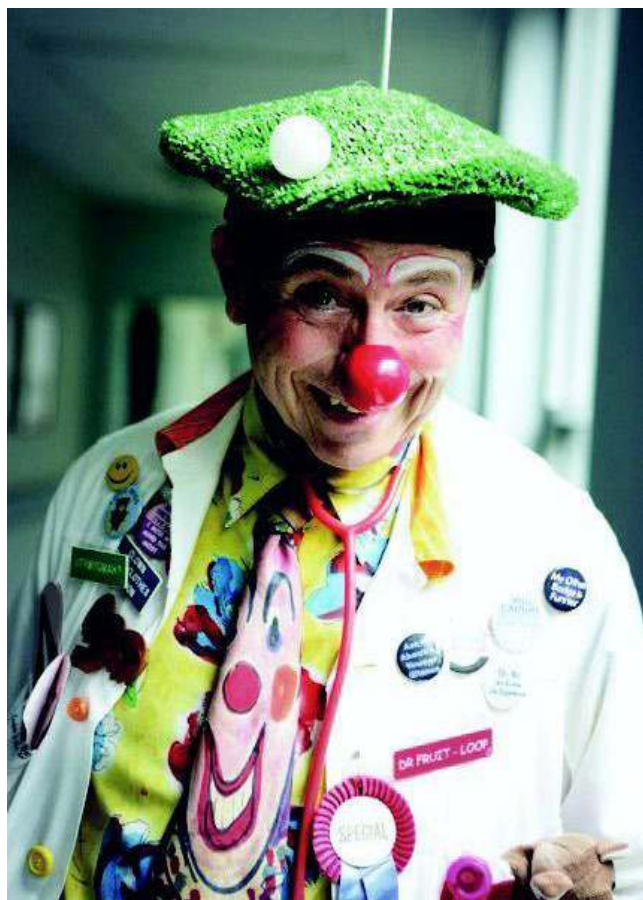
DTA AGM Tuesday 18th November 6:30pm Sydney time.

Nominations wanted: President, Vice President 2, NSW rep, SA rep, TAS rep.

Organise your phone-in attendance now! More information coming.



Farewell Dr Fruit-Loop...



SPITZER, Dr Peter aka Dr Fruit-Loop

1.5.1946 - 8.8.2014

Peacefully passed away surrounded by his family. Peter was a highly respected member of the Southern Highlands and the medical community.

A giver of smiles and sharer of laughter

Published in The Sydney Morning Herald on Aug. 12, 2014
(Obituary edited for this newsletter - Ed)

It is with heavy hearts and sadness that we must announce the passing of Dr Peter Spitzer aka Dr Fruit-Loop, our beloved co-founder and Medical Director of The Humour Foundation. Peter lost his valiant battle with cancer on Friday.

We send our love to Peter's family.

No words seem enough at this time. Thank you Peter for touching so many lives with your very special brand of 'open heart' surgery. The world has lost a shining star and master court jester far too early. The Humour Foundation family and everyone you inspired will miss you dearly.

No one will be able to fill your big clown shoes. The number of red nose transplants, 'cat' scans and funny bone diagnoses you have delivered over the last 17 years is countless.

You forged the way, through a marriage of art and medicine, for the beautiful work of the Clown Doctors to begin. Over 1,000,000 lives have been touched since, and Clown Doctors now bring smiles and laughter to over 150,000 sick children and their families around Australia every year when they need it most.

You trail blazed this work into aged care, bringing to life the awe inspiring Elder Clowns program helping those living with dementia celebrate life.

You pioneered world first research projects to prove the beneficial health impact of the work.

You educated us all about the importance of humour and laughter to our health and in our lives.

You truly lived and breathed our motto that 'Laughter is the best medicine'.

We will keep your legacy alive through Clown Doctors, Elder Clowns, Laughter Boss and Laughter Works. We will try our very best to honour you by continuing this work with the same generosity, heart, perseverance and passion that you exemplified and lived by every day.

Farewell Peter, we will try to smile through our tears at this heartbreaking time...

If you would like to send any messages of condolence or celebration of Peter's life we have set up a memorial page for Peter on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DrPeterSpitzer>

HarbisonCare's Role with Dr Peter Spitzer

It was with great sadness last week that we learnt of the passing of Dr Peter Spitzer (aka Dr Fruit-Loop). I first met Peter back in 1996 when I first started working at HarbisonCare and Peter would come in to see his patients, at that time he was a local GP who his patients spoke very highly of...I had no idea of his many other talents. It wasn't until the 8th May 2004 that I truly discovered the amazing person he was...on that day he ran his second ever Laughter Boss training workshop at HarbisonCare (if my memory serves me correctly I believe the first workshop was held in Hobart). I was converted! After that we 'played' around a bit with some small scale studies looking at humour interventions and depression, all the time Peter and others were working hard to get some funding to undertake some serious research...they succeeded and so the SMILE research project took off.

Peter during that time was always giving me updates and sending me information or interesting new articles, we crossed paths both at work and at conferences. He was the most entertaining and interesting speaker, he was passionate, committed and curious. At work he would engage with residents (not just his patients), he brought a smile to everyone's faces including the staff. We continued to keep in touch and just about every year we would run some kind of fundraising event to support the work of The Humour Foundation that Peter and his wife Judy were involved in founding.

A tribute to Dr Peter Spitzer

As I sit here and watch the movie Patch Adams I am reminded and even more appreciative of the contribution you have left not only for the profession of Diversional Therapy but the contribution to Australia's Medical Profession.

As the co-founder of the Humour Foundation and the Clown Doctor program in Australia, most recently you also had a major role to play in bringing humour to aged care especially those diagnosed with dementia. It is through "the smile within study" (a world's first of its kind) I had the pleasure of meeting you and completing my studies as a "laughter boss". From there we stayed in contact and one of my proudest moments in my career was to present "The benefits of humour therapy" at the Diversional Therapy Convention in Brisbane 2012.

From there you continued to teach, inspire and advocate for the role of humour in aged care implementing DTs and RAOs as Laughter Bosses. THANKYOU for the gift of humour and your big thinking, your endless time, dedication and all round generosity of human spirit and laughter. You will be sadly



Last year I was getting withdrawal symptoms and felt the need for another Peter workshop (didn't help that I was the only staff member left in the organisation who had completed the original workshop, so I was operating on my own a lot of the time and getting some strange looks and comments!! - this didn't deter me, I had learnt the value of humour). The second HarbisonCare Laughter Boss workshop was held on the 23rd August 2013 and this time we had the CEO and DoN at the training, getting them on board meant there was more likely to be support and acceptance of what we were doing - it worked! The workshop was amazing (again!) and I am more than ever committed to the value of humour and the need to bring smiles and laughter to all.

Peter passed away on the 8th August 2014, his Memorial Service was held on the 14th August - it was standing room only, there were tears shed, smiles and laughter. Peter touched the lives of so many, he was an inspiration, he was encouraging, he was compassionate - he will be missed. But his work will live on...thank you Peter.

Submitted by Josie Peacock

missed, never forgotten and all your army of Laughter Bosses I am sure will continue to honour your memory by spreading the humour, laughter and smiles. You not only brought smiles and laughter to children and families but have started a revolution of humour in aged care. To use your words "jest wishes". Until we meet again...

I would like to encourage you all to look at the humour foundation and help Dr Peter Spitzer's dream come true to have at least one Laughter Boss in each aged care facility, the day course is amazing and will give you the tools to assist you in increasing humour and laughter within your facility.

I would like to leave you with a quote or what I think is a great job description:

"It is the job of the Laughter Boss, via open-heart surgery, to touch the soul and give it room to smile and laugh." Dr Peter Spitzer

Submitted by Kim Bromley



National Workshop programme news and updates with Steph

Hello everyone,

Well the September Conference is just around the corner and the buzz is it is going to be the best one ever!

There are two workshops being run on the Thursday 18th of September before the Conference so if you are attending the Conference why not sign up for a workshop too!

The Workshop format before the conference has been a new inclusion in recent years at DTA's National conferences, with members taking an extra day to gain further Professional Development by attending. (Many attended last year's laughter Boss Training workshop with the late Dr Peter Spritzer at the pre-Conference workshop).

Attending the workshop before the conference means making the most of the conference environment and the diversity of members and non-members that come along from around the nation and the world. Where else can you enjoy learning and sharing your workplace adventures with people who understand exactly what you do, coming from as far away as Japan, New Zealand and all other parts of Australia?

This year's workshops are addressing some of the most practical aspects that Diversional Therapist and Leisure staff are facing in their roles: acquiring some of the skills and knowledge to run meaningful and therapeutic Art and Music activities and the ever present need for different and interesting activities to include in your programs.

When we put together our monthly programs we are addressing the leisure and health needs of our participants. Art and Music are part of most people's lives and yet we are often unaware of the therapeutic aspects that a love for music and art can have. We know we like a certain painting or a song however we may not be aware of the positive affect that just seeing that art work or hearing a meaningful piece of music can have on our overall physical and mental health and what about when we are actually creating that art or that music ourselves?

Our two presenters for the Music and Art Therapy workshop are two of the best in their field and it is in the contexts of the Conference that we as an association are able to provide these high profile presenters to learn from.

Dr Loretta Quinn is a Registered Music Therapist and Registered Nurse, with a unique and extensive understanding of the needs of people with dementia, and their professional and primary carers, she is a great supporter of DTA and understands what we do. This half day session will leave you with a practical and realistic application of music as a therapy for people with dementia as well as in your general activity groups. Music can make the heart sing and even if you don't have a musical bone in your body this session will have you humming a few bars.

Glenda Needs has used the Arts therapeutically for almost 15 years. She holds many qualifications including Masters of Disability, BA in Drama and English, Graduate Diploma of Creative Arts Therapy, Graduate Certificate in Neuroscience and has an extensive background in multimodal Arts Therapy. Glenda comes from the IKON Institute being the largest provider of Art Therapy training in Australia and through this session will help you to discover your inner artist while giving you the opportunity to grow your skills on a practical level.

We still have available places for this workshop and encourage your attendance at this amazing educational and practical opportunity if you have not as yet signed up.

The Takeaway Café Activity workshop is almost full. At this workshop we are launching a resource booklet of inspirational, practical and diverse activities that members have presented at the different workshops around the country. This booklet will also be available to Conference attendees.

So even with the countdown on to the Conference I am still working on your state workshops, with further workshops planned still this year for Victoria, Western Australia and the Sydney workshop on the day of the Annual General Meeting of the Association in November.

If you are still wanting a workshop near you this year and think you can get the numbers to attend I am always willing to discuss your needs and work at getting the education to you.

So much to do and such exciting times!

So I'll leave you with a quote from another funny man we lost in this last month: "Why do they call it rush hour if nothing moves?" Robin Williams

Until next month
Stephania Bejma



Workshops coming up!

Contact the office or go to website for the registration flyers!

19th September - SA Adelaide
(Pre-Conference Workshop - Open to all!)

17th October - VIC Shepparton

7th November - WA Perth

18th November - North Ryde NSW
(followed by AGM)

Latrobe Workshop

We had a great roll up to our Tasmanian workshop with lots of non-members attending and getting to know the benefit of being a Diversional Therapy Australia member.

Our presenters were diverse and offered a lot of great educational information to apply to innovative programming. Christine, the Brain Gym presenter flew down from Victoria to tell us about the amazing results and influence that small, seemingly insignificant movements can have on our brains and our general wellbeing, all things that we can incorporate into a gentle exercise program or indeed a creative and expressive activity, even little tricks and movements that can stimulate better involvement in your programs.

Ann from the Parkinson's Association was also a wealth of practical information and understanding of what aspects of this disease affect a person's ability to participate in meaningful and successful leisure.

Sandra, DTA's Tasmanian board member presented on the many different ways that we can welcome people into a new facility, what can make that move easier for people and adopting a customer service approach in line with the changes occurring in the aged care system.

My presentation on Grief and Loss touched on some of the issues of not dealing with these emotions in a work place

setting and how you can assist others including clients and families as well as other staff to deal with their loss and grief.

Keith from the local Port Sorrel Men's Shed was a gem and had us all in stitches when he talked about the differences between men and women and how as leisure staff we can use different communication skills to tap into the needs of our male participants.

A big thankyou to all that attended and to our Takeaway café presenter Anna Clements who told us about her workplaces' innovative dinner dances that they hold regularly. Some really great theme ideas to take away.

So if you haven't been to a DTA workshop in a while check out the website for workshop dates still coming up for this year and the proposed list for next year's workshops coming out soon.

Don't miss out on an exceptional opportunity to learn and to meet others in your field. It isn't all about the networking but this great opportunity to share and talk about your particular issue, concern and great activity ideas in a friendly environment you just can't get anywhere else.

See you at the next workshop near you.

Steph



Minister Ajaka launches NSW Carers Strategy

Minister for Ageing and Disability Services, the Hon. John Ajaka MLC, thanked everyone who helped develop the NSW Carers Strategy at its NSW Parliament House launch on 7 August 2014.

Carers and others celebrated the launch of the Strategy which is expected to make it easier for carers to participate in activities outside their caring role, including education and employment, and to have input into the development of policies that affect them. Carers are the family members and friends who provide ongoing care and support to someone else because of disability, chronic illness, mental illness, dementia or frail age.

The Strategy sets out at a glance the vision for carers and the planned reforms and outcomes in each of the five focus areas: employment and education; carer health and wellbeing; information and community awareness; carer engagement; and the evidence base about carers. It identifies the 16 projects that are the first to progress the work.



Implementation of the Strategy will also be in collaboration with carers, the private sector, non-government organisations and government agencies to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for carers.

The NSW Carers Strategy is available at www.carers.nsw.gov.au. For more information contact Ms Helen McFarlane, Principal Policy Officer, Carers, Ageing and Disability Inclusion on 9248 0871 or email carerstrategy@fac.nsw.gov.au.

DTA Portfolios

DTA are looking for volunteers interesting in participating in working in small teams on the following portfolios are Education, Marketing, International Liaison, Membership Growth.

Each Portfolio is directed by a Board member, however, open to any member. Some projects each portfolio are involved in are short term and some are longer in duration, so there is the capacity for a member to be part of the portfolio for just a short term or longer term if they wish.

Please send your expression of interest to the DTA Office with the heading of which portfolio you are interested in.

Corn Patch

Q: Why did the dinosaur cross the road?
A: Because there were no chickens back then.

Q: When were King Arthur's army too tired to fight?
A: When they had lots of sleepless knights!

Q: Why are robots never afraid?
A: Because they have nerves of steel.

Q: What did the blanket say to the bed?
A: "Don't worry, I've got you covered!"

Q: What happens when a cat eats a lemon?
A: It becomes a sourpuss.

Sourced from: <http://www.chy.com.au/>

Great humour-based resources perfect for anti-stress for us and, if you subscribe, you are sent a once a week a free email of Friday Funnies - a list of corny (and funny!) jokes - some are suitable for our clients - some are a bit racy... but all are hilarious! - Margie

Book Review with the Ed.

This month we have a guest book reviewer Janet Godsell. Janet is reviewing Laretta Kaldor's latest book.

Title: The Recreation Officer's S A M
Simple Activity Manual

Author: Laretta Kaldor

The author Laretta Kaldor started work in the aged care industry in 1984 and has been passionate about leisure in aged care for many years. She has written manuals for recreation staff in aged care which are currently used by staff in day centres and in residential care. Her manuals are also used by training organisations, TAFES and Universities offering courses in Leisure and Health.

Laretta is a graduate of Charles Sturt University in Leisure and Health. She is a Level 1 Diversional Therapist recognized by Diversional Therapy Australia. She has worked with clients who have early dementia through Alzheimer's Australia NSW and has presented many workshops on practical activities for DTA, Redleaf College in NSW and in various states as well as community organizations in Sydney. In the last 5 years she has presented her Besides Bingo workshops for staff and volunteers who work in adult day respite centres and works with recreation staff and residents in the inner west of Sydney through Medicare local.

This recent Manual is an omnibus of 100 pages of activities for leisure programmes in aged care homes and day centres. It is full of easy practical ideas for programmes ready to photocopy and use.

Suggestions include Reminiscing programmes, Special Activities for Lower functioning Clients, Music as Therapy, Inspirational Quotes, Humour pages, Quizzes, Art and Craft, Games to make and Play and ideas for "Using Today's Technology"

The programmes are clearly set out and each one contains suggestions for Resources, links to websites and You Tube.

Many programmes include quiz questions designed to provide mental stimulation, and background information on each topic to stimulate discussion and social interaction.

There are 6 sessions designed to provide sensory stimulation for clients who live in residential care and simple activities which provide olfactory stimulation as well as social and reminiscing pleasure for clients who are isolated due to sensory loss. These are excellent tools for person centred care and individual 1-1 as well as group activities.

As most Leisure and Recreation staff are aware music provides a wonderful source of pleasure for Clients, both in aged care facilities and Day centres.

In the section on Music Appreciation Laretta gives examples of how modern technology can be used to enhance enjoyment by using iPads, Tablets or smart phones and shares an example of how You Tube was used to stimulate and engage a client living in a dementia specific unit.

In "Using Today's Technology" Laretta points out that an iPad or iPad mini is beginning to evolve as a great tool for older people or any age regardless of cognitive ability. This session includes information and resources which are particularly useful for people with cognitive issues. For people once able to use a computer adapting to an iPad is not hard and can provide good leisure and communication strategies which allows for independence and enjoyment

A practitioner of many years standing Laretta's 'SAM TO THE RESCUE' "last minute life savers and ideas for your programmes" will be more than welcomed by those using the manual. It includes useful ideas for staff who may be working alone or who have limited resources.

Ideas for "Games to Make and Play" include easy to follow instructions and are a boon for staff on a limited budget.

The last part of the manual includes art and craft ideas together with clear instructions. These ideas are particularly suitable for more active clients. The activities not only provide enjoyment but encourage participation, dexterity and creativity

Diversional Therapists, RAO's and Leisure and Lifestyle staff will benefit from the "Useful Tips on Getting Through Your Day" offering "tips on Stress and Time management. The section on Motivating Clients will be more than helpful when dealing with a client or clients lacking in motivation.

I recommend this new manual, which includes new sections on activities for lower functioning clients using iPads and laptops, to staff employed in Aged care facilities, day centres and libraries.

To purchase this book go to <http://laurettakaldor.com.au/>

Next month we will see two more reviews of Pam Bell's books
- Ed



Members Articles

Bastille Day Celebration

On Thursday 12th July 2014 residents celebrated an early Bastille Day held at Macquarie Lodge. Bastille Day is the French National Day, which celebrates the beginning of the French Revolution in the storming of the Bastille in 1789. The official Bastille Day is on July 14.

The afternoon was full of fun and culture, starting with a quiz on France from <http://www.goldencarers.com> which is a great website for quizzes and other resources. Residents were served both hot croissants with jam and chocolate croissants, which were delicious.

Residents learnt about the history of the day, given by Recreational Activity Officers trying with an audio version of the history. Unfortunately this was too fast for the residents; however it may be useful at other facilities. Instead RAOs talked to residents about the history and significance of the day. This resource is on www.youtube.com by the Age of Empires (video game), which has many video resources on different history events.

Residents also sang along to Frère Jacques which most residents knew, and the French National Anthem, which a few residents knew.

Residents were then entertained by RAOs dancing their version of the can-can which was highly energetic and involved many legs in the air!

This was followed by RAOs dancing to a French children's song called Clap your hands, which was fun involving clapping, stamping feet, turning around and jumping in the air! Residents joined in with this song.

The songs of Frère Jacques, Clap your hands, can-can and the history of Bastille Day were retrieved from youtube.com and were converted to audio version for the day so they could be used on a CD player.

Jessica Horton

Recreational Activities Officer

Noticeboard

PALAESTRA Call for Papers

PALAESTRA is a quarterly scholarly journal focused on adapted sport, physical education, and recreational therapy. PALAESTRA is now accepting manuscripts that focus on applied research, exemplary programs, practical applications, and resources for educators and practitioners. Manuscripts will go through a double blind re-view process.

The focus of PALAESTRA is broad and includes practical applications for teaching, coaching, and leading; implications and applications of scientific research for training and teaching; administration, supervision, and management; professional preparation and in-service education; innovative ideas and practices; assessment and classifications; relationships of basic sciences to methods and activities for individuals with disabilities; sports medicine and athletic training applied to individuals with disabilities; equipment and supplies used in these programs; and professional issues and trends.

Manuscript Submission

Ideal manuscripts deal with practical information or applied research on any topic associated with sport, physical education, recreation, dance, and related areas involving participants with disabilities, each interpreted and applied in its broadest way. Manuscripts typically range in length from 12 to 15 double-spaced pages (12 pt. font), with images or tables (8.5 x 11 with margins of at least an inch) and references. Submissions should include a manuscript, including an abstract, in a Word document; there should be no author information on the manuscript. Include a separate cover letter with author contact information as well as bios of authors. Images (jpeg or tiff), 300 dpi resolution, with captions for each picture submitted are strongly encouraged.

Please e-mail submissions to:

Martin E. Block, editor PALAESTRA

Kinesiology Department University of Virginia meb7u@virginia.edu

For more information about the journal or the types of publications published in PALAESTRA, please visit our website at www.palaestra.com, or email Martin Block at meb7u@virginia.edu.

Journal Watch



Title: The relationship between apathy and participation in therapeutic activities in nursing home residents with dementia: Evidence for an association and directions for further research

Author: Julie M Ellis, Aged Care Services Australia Group Pty Ltd., Australia; School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, Australia ; Colleen J Doyle, National Ageing Research Institute, Australia; Australian Catholic University and Catholic Homes, Australia ; Suganya Selvarajah, La Trobe University, Australia

Contact: Julie M Ellis, School of Nursing and Midwifery, La Trobe University, Plenty Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3086, Australia. Email: j.ellis@latrobe.edu.au

Journal: Dementia, March 2014.

Abstract

Apathy is one of the most frequent and early symptoms of dementia. Because apathy is characterised by lack of initiative and motivation, it leads to considerable burden being placed on carers to ensure that the person living with dementia has a reasonable quality of life. The aim of this study was to

investigate the relationship between apathy and participation in therapeutic activities for older people with dementia living in nursing homes. Ninety residents were recruited into the study, and apathy was measured by nursing home staff using the Apathy Evaluation Scale Clinician version. Staff also compiled data on each resident's involvement in therapeutic activities. Among this sample, the mean age was 84.8 years, and mean length of stay in the nursing home was 1.8 years. The mean apathy score was 50.4, indicating that on average the residents had a moderate level of apathy. Overall, residents participated in six activities per week and those residents who were involved in the most activities had the lowest levels of apathy. This paper provides evidence that residents involved in therapeutic activities have lower levels of apathy. Further research should be conducted on the direction of causality, whether apathy levels can be changed through participation in therapeutic activities, the relationship between dementia severity and modifiability of apathy, and the intensity of therapeutic activities required to maintain functioning.

Sourced at:

<http://dem.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/03/25/1471301214527300.abstract>

Web Watch



Due to our tribute this month to Dr Peter Spitzer I think it is only fitting to promote the Humour Foundation as this month's web watch - Ed.

<http://www.humourfoundation.com.au/>

Noticeboard

DTA are sad to report the passing of DTA Life Member Lynne Caminada from St Leonards Tasmania. On behalf of DTA Members and Board, our sincere best wishes are extended to Lynne's family, friends and colleagues. A special person who will be missed by all.



From The Editor

I sit in my study today listening to the rain and think of what a sad few weeks it has been with the loss of two great people that brought so much entertainment, laughter and love to people from many walks of life- I am talking of the late Robin Williams and of course DTA's close friend Dr Peter Spitzer.

I had great pleasure working with Dr Peter Spitzer at our last Sydney conference and enjoyed sitting with him at lunch and listening to his enthusiasm as to where the role of the Clown Doctors and Laughter Bosses were going both in the hospital and Aged Care settings. The Southern Highlands has lost a wonderful General Practitioner, health professional and friend but while the days may seem dark with our weather the stars shine brighter at night. As the song goes 'Always look on the bright side of life'. I think both Josie and Kim have summed up his contributions well in this edition of our newsletter.

Conference is coming up quickly so if you have not organised your place now is the time to do so as it is a wonderful opportunity to network with fellow colleagues, listen to what is happening in the many realms of our industry, get to interact with products and speak directly to some of our suppliers at the trade stands and for some even utilise the time to have a well-deserved mini break.

Also this newsletter edition has the information of the upcoming AGM please read this information carefully as a number of positions will be vacated and need members from our association to fill. Also there is a call out for any members that feel a board position may be too much but feel they could work on a small or long project under a portfolio.

As Mary Poppins says 'A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down' and to many of our clients therapeutic recreation is their medicine we bring participation, involvement, inclusion, laughter and colourful activity to their lives.

On a final note to brighten your day if you have access to a computer this film clip went viral it is of the Diana Isaac Retirement Village in Christchurch, New Zealand, who have proved you're never too old for anything and recreated a video of a hit song by music producer Pharrell Williams. You can watch the video here: <http://www.smoothfm.com.au/videos/nz-nursing-home-remakes-pharrell-williams-happy-video>

I hope it inspires you and brings a little happiness to your day 😊

Till next month

The Ed

Can you help?

Member Cheryl Todd has just taken the big scary step of starting CSU B Health Science Leisure and Health.

CONGRATULATIONS Cheryl!

She is interested in connecting with others who have taken the plunge into Uni study - especially in the Newcastle NSW area. Email her: ctodd1959@optusnet.com.au



Diary Dates

Due to feedback and changes to our newsletter format I think rather than me as the Editor provide you with dates I think maybe suitable we are going to provide you with the websites for you to go to so you can pick the most specific information to your position in industry.

Australian Government Department of Health
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubs-calendar-index.htm>

NSW Health
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/calendar/pages/default.aspx>

WA Health
<http://www.whatson.health.wa.gov.au/month.cfm?month=7>

TAS Health
http://www.getmoving.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/82403/2014_HEALTH_WELLBEING_TASMANIA_CALENDAR.pdf

Vic Health (Better Health Channel)
<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pages/events?open>

QLD Health
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-alerts/events/>

SA Council of Social Services
<http://www.sacoss.org.au/sites/default/files/public/documents/2014%20Awareness%20Weeks.pdf>

NT Health
<http://www.health.nt.gov.au/index.aspx>

ACT Health
<http://health.act.gov.au/home/>

Our Community
<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/calendar/>

Australian Government Department of Social Services
<http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-services/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates>

and each states tourism websites.

* Please note when governments change department names may change or merge and therefore websites may also change.