



## Arafmi Newsletter | Jun 2019



### *What's happened in the second quarter of the year*

Here we are in the second week of June and we can't believe that we are almost halfway through 2019!

The last few months has been quite busy for everybody. Sadly, we will soon bid farewell to our CEO, Gary Bourke, but we are very excited to welcome a new CEO into our team. More on page 3 of this newsletter.

We also hosted a Social Lunch for Carers in May, not to mention the excitement of the Federal Election. But as ever, everyone at Arafmi has been focused on delivering services to both our carers and our NDIS participants.

We were all thrilled with our Carer's Social Lunch at The Sebel and a big thank you to everybody who could make it. Watch this space – we may be organising more in the not-too-distant future.

The Federal Election has delivered us our very first Minister for National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and no doubt he will be under the watchful gaze of everybody in the NDIS community.

The colder months seem to be upon us with the overnight temperatures dropping recently to single digits, which for most of us can be quite bracing.

Keep those cold and flus at bay by drinking lots of water, eating nutritional foods, washing your hands regularly and getting enough sleep.

From all of us at Arafmi, we hope you enjoy the newsletter and we look forward to bringing you the next one!

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## Social Lunch for Carers | Thurs, May 16<sup>th</sup>

On a quiet Thursday in the middle of May this year, a group of carers gathered to enjoy a beautiful social lunch. We thought it would be nice to provide an opportunity for our carers to gather in a social situation merely with the focus being on catching up.

Our very talented Bronwynne lead everybody through a guided meditation to begin the day, and that was followed by a short presentation on how to naturally deal with headaches. We believe we all came away with some handy tips that we can use the next time a pesky headache appears!

Following the presentation, we drew a raffle and three lucky winners went home with some lovely self-care prizes.

We handed out feedback forms to everybody who attended, and we received an overwhelming number of completed forms. These forms are extremely valuable to us as they serve as information we can use when planning and creating more member events.

From the feedback we learnt that everybody had a lovely time at the lunch. Reasons were many, but one rang through as the most popular: a chance to talk to other people who are in the same boat.

If you didn't attend the social lunch, but would like to provide some ideas for any future carer events, please email [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au).

### Would You Like To Be The First To Know About Upcoming Events?

The best way to ensure that you're first in line to be notified about upcoming member events, is to become an Arafmi member!

Benefits of Arafmi Membership are many, but probably the most coveted reason is that you would receive early notice about future events such as lunches, workshops, carer retreats and more!

To check your membership status, please contact us at [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au) or call **07 3254 1881**





## Latest News & Updates

### New CEO for Arafmi Ltd

*Irene Clelland*

Last month we shared the sad news that our current CEO Gary Bourke, tendered his resignation. We are now pleased to be able to advise that we have appointed a new CEO, Irene Clelland.

Originally from Glasgow, Irene moved to Australia in 2011 and has spent her career working in management roles with NGO's that provide services to people who experience mental illness or disability.

Irene comes to us from Grow, a national organisation that specialises in peer led group supports. At Grow she was the State Manager for QLD and WA.

Up until 2015, Irene was an international hockey umpire, umpiring major tournaments including the Commonwealth Games and several World Cups. Since retiring from umpiring, she continues to give back via coaching of umpires as well as designing a mental health training program that can be utilised by sports teams to support emerging mental health issues for teammates.

We'd like to extend a very warm Arafmi welcome to Irene and can't wait for her to get started!

### Federal Election

Following the recent federal election, we now have our first Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Stuart Robert MP. We will certainly be following Mr Robert closely to ensure he follows through on the promises made by the Prime Minister during the election.

These promises included ensuring the NDIS is fully funded and an increased employment target, including a new 7% employment target for people with disability across the Australian Public Service.

### Sarah Roxburgh resignation

We were sad to hear that our Queensland Carer Representative on the National Health Consumer and Carer Forum, Sarah Roxburgh recently tendered her resignation.

Sarah took on the role in August 2018 and in this time she has volunteered to be the co-chair for the Operational Guidelines Working Group, updated the Forum's code of conduct and worked on improving the Forum's marketing and communication strategies by updating the Forum's technology mechanism.

We'd like to thank Sarah for her contribution and wish her all the best in her upcoming ventures!



Mary (far left) a carer from our Maryborough group recently celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! We hope you had a wonderful day!

# Carer Support Groups

## Who are they for?

Arafmi Carer Support Groups are open to anyone who is caring for or about a relative or friend with a psychosocial disability. They are run by Carer Facilitators who have been trained in facilitation skills.

## What to expect?

Arafmi Carer Support Groups provide a safe place for carers to come together on a regular basis to:

- Share their feelings
- Socialise & connect with others
- Offer comfort & support
- Share helpful coping skills

Confidentiality is essential and all participants are encouraged to keep personal information shared within the group.

## How to join a support group?

Support Groups meet in various locations in Brisbane and regional Queensland. All carers are welcome. Please don't worry if you forget to book or let us know you are coming, just turn up.

Support Group times/dates are subject to change. Please contact the Arafmi office on **07 3254 1881** or for regional areas, please phone **1800 35 1881**.

### CARINDALE

Carindale Library Meeting Room  
Westfield Carindale, Carindale  
**1st Monday of each month from 11.30am**

### CLEVELAND

RDCOTA Cottage  
Weippen Road, Cleveland  
(In the hospital grounds)  
**4th Monday of each month from 10am**

### INALA

The Hub Neighbourhood Centre  
76 Corsair Avenue, Inala  
**3rd Monday of each month from 10am**

### INDOOROOPILLY

Indooroopilly Library Meeting Room  
(next to cinema), Westfield Indooroopilly  
**1st Thursday of each month from 1.30pm**

### LOGAN

Logan Central Library  
26 Wilbur Street, Logan Central  
**2nd Wednesday of each month from 10am**

### NEW FARM

ARAFMI House  
76 Merthyr Road, New Farm  
**Last Saturday of each month from 10am**

### REDCLIFFE

1 Lamington Drive, Redcliffe  
**3rd Friday of each month from 10am**



# Expression of Interest: Volunteer Facilitators

Arafmi proudly runs a number of support groups throughout Queensland to help provide support for people caring for a loved one, friend or relative with a mental illness.

We're always looking for new ways to grow our Support Groups to connect with other mental health carers and help set up groups in new areas, and we can't do this without the wonderful support of our volunteer facilitators.

If you have ever thought about facilitating a Carer Support Group for mental health carers, or feel there is an opportunity to start a new group in a different area, we'd love to hear from you!

## **Do I need to be currently caring for someone with a mental illness?**

No, it's not completely necessary. Some of our facilitators have previously cared for someone and some are still actively in a caring role.

## **Is there training to become a facilitator?**

You do not need to be an expert! We offer professional training from our Arafmi Carer Support Team to help you with your facilitation skills and ensure you make the most out of this rewarding role.

## **What is the commitment time?**

Ideally, we'd love our facilitators to commit to running Support Groups once a month for a minimum of 12 months.

We understand you may have other commitments and are happy to take expressions of interest for co-facilitators who can also share the workload.

## **Is there an opportunity to start up a new group in a different area?**

Absolutely! At the moment, we have 7 active Brisbane groups and 4 regional groups. We're always looking to grow.

If you feel that there is a need to start a new group in an area near you, we'd love to hear from you.

## **How do I register my interest?**

To find out more about facilitating or starting a new group, please contact Ruth, our Carer Support Coordinator on **07 3254 1881** or email **supportgroups@arafmi.com.au**.



## Workshops | New Farm

Our workshops are open to those who care for or about a relative or friend with a psychosocial disability.

### What to expect?

The interactive workshops are designed to help carers understand the impact of mental illness on their loved one; how to improve their relationship; how to develop caring skills, and how carers can keep themselves well emotionally in the long run.

There's also an opportunity to connect with other carers who may be experiencing similar issues and learn from each other.

### How to register?

For registration and more information about our workshops, please call **07 3254 1881** or email [carereducation@arafmi.com.au](mailto:carereducation@arafmi.com.au)

### View our upcoming workshops online:

[www.arafmi.com.au/family-carers/workshops/](http://www.arafmi.com.au/family-carers/workshops/)

“ As a Carer it is easy to focus on the person with the mental illness. Despite believing in my own self-care, it is good to see a broader aspect. ”

Carer, New Farm

### JUNE

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
Understanding and Supporting Recovery

### JULY

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
Coping Skills for Carers

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
Effective Communication

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
The Power of Personal Boundaries

### AUGUST

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
Dual Diagnosis – Mental Illness & Substance Use

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> (9:30am – 1:00pm)**  
Grief and Beyond

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> (9:00am – 12:30pm)**  
Bouncing Back – Building Resilience

More workshops to be announced. Please call for more information.



## Understanding & Supporting Recovery | Jun 19<sup>th</sup>

Does your loved one know that after the arrival of mental illness there is a possibility to thrive, not just survive?

With appropriate, ongoing support and treatment, a good majority of people with mental illness are able to recover well and lead fulfilling lives in the community.

It often starts with carers understanding the recovery process and exploring ways in which you can help support someone with a mental illness through this journey. Small things can make a big difference. Simply being there to listen and to support your loved one is one way to make a big difference.

Another is by learning as much as possible about the mental illness and any treatments, and also understanding how your role as a carer can be a fundamental piece of the recovery process. Recovery is an ongoing experience of personal growth and learning, taking risks, falling and trying again and being able to live with oneself and with others and belonging to a community.

This workshop will focus on understanding and supporting mental health recovery. It offers suggestions on how carers can avoid common

pitfalls and how to best support their loved ones on their journey of recovery.

Carers, come along to help you give hope to your loved ones for wellness connection, meaning and purpose.

### **When?**

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of June, 9:30am – 1:00pm

### **Where?**

Arafmi, 76 Merthyr Road, New Farm QLD 4005

### **How to register?**

To register for this workshop or to find out more, please call us on **07 3254 1881** or email **[carereducation@arafmi.com.au](mailto:carereducation@arafmi.com.au)**

“  
Recovery is a process.  
It takes time.  
It takes patience.  
It takes everything you've got.  
”



## Carer Research Group | Jun 27<sup>th</sup>

### Help us lobby for changes to the support of mental health carers.

We're currently seeking a number of carers to participate in our research groups in Brisbane on Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to help us lobby for changes to the support of mental health carers.

We will provide drinks and snacks and will be more than happy to cover the cost of your parking or transport.

**Date:** Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Session 1:** 10:00 am – 12:00 pm or

**Session 2:** 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

**Venue:** 84a Brunswick Street (entrance on Water Street) Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006



**BONUS:** As a way of saying thank you for your time, we would also like to offer all attendees a \$50 Coles Group & Myer Gift Card!

### How to register?

To register your interest please call **07 3254 1881** or visit [arafmi.com.au/carers-research-group](http://arafmi.com.au/carers-research-group).

Please note, we will require copies of your transport and parking receipts should you wish to be reimbursed.

### Can't make it? You're still welcome to share your carer story.

Our goal is simple. We want to share an honest narrative for many mental health carers which captures the story of their caring role, both the good and the bad.

By doing so, we're helping to uncover and highlight the different issues carers are currently facing so we can help unite forces and advocate for change.

Sharing your story with others might help other carers out there understand that they're not alone and that they can seek help with Arafmi Ltd.

To express your interest, please contact us at [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au)



## Fun Fridays at Brisbane North

### Discover and explore new experiences

Fun Fridays was developed early 2019 by Arafmi North Brisbane to provide our participants with an opportunity to discover and explore new experiences and form friendships in the safety of a group.

Two of Arafmi's experienced support workers, Deb and Robyn, have led the group outings which have been booked out for weeks in advance.

Our participants have been on outings to the Redcliffe Peninsula, Samford Valley, Op-shopping and enjoyed an Easter barbecue in Kalinga Park

Some remarks from participants have been: "that was a triple fantastic day" and "best day ever". Friendships have been formed, new places enjoyed and there has been a whole load of fun and laughter along the way.

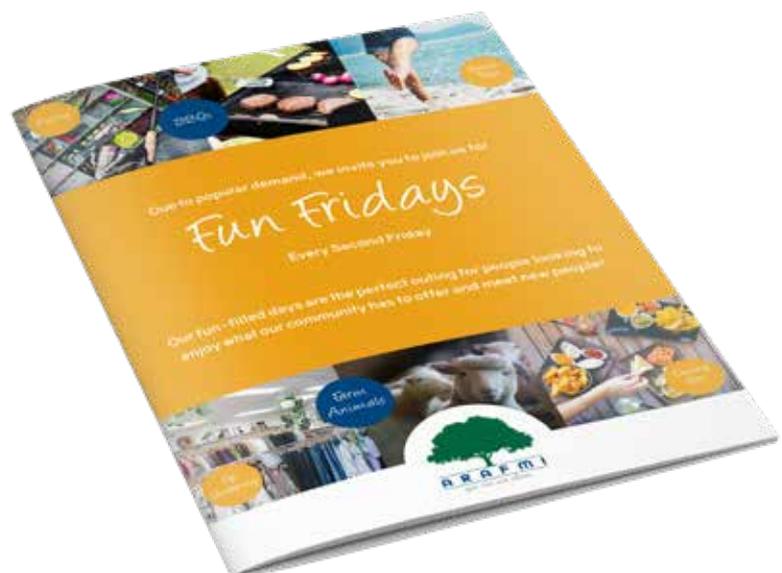
Every outing includes a shared lunch in a relaxing setting and participants are picked up and returned to their residences by our support workers. The cost of the outings is covered by NDIS.

Occasionally a small fee of \$5 or \$10 is required for entry fees or lunch. The outings have been a huge success and will continue every second Friday.

Some of our upcoming outings include Walkabout Creek Zoo, a movie day, citycat ride and picnic at Kangaroo Point, Botanic Gardens and a visit to the Gallery of Modern Art and lunch at South Bank.

Arafmi North Brisbane would like to thank our participants for embracing these group outings and exploring our beautiful Brisbane region with us. You guys rock!

Information about Fun Fridays is available by calling Arafmi North Brisbane on **07 3857 0377** and speaking to our team, or requesting a copy of our latest calendar of events.





# How Gardening Can Beat Depression

As we care for our loved ones who suffer mental health illness, we can at times fall into depression or suffer anxiety ourselves. Self-care, whilst important for everyone, is especially so for those of us who are carers for others. Unlike paid roles there are no 'set' hours, no holidays, no real downtime. So we are perfectly placed to occasionally become depressed or suffer anxiety.

## Gardening: A Cure For Depression?

There has been much written about the steps you can take to help with depression, including various activities that help alleviate the symptoms. Exercise, limiting alcohol intake, surrounding yourself with friends and family to name a few. But have you considered gardening? Yes, getting your hands dirty in the garden can sometimes be the secret to lifting yourself from the darkness of depression according to a recent study. This study found that gardening and horticultural therapy decreases stress, anger, fatigue, and depression and anxiety symptoms.

## How Does It Help?

Gardening helps with mindfulness which is the practice of being aware of the present moment without judgment. For a moment it's just you and the garden. Your mind is focused solely on this task and it's a perfect opportunity for mindfulness. Gardening can give a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Gardening gets you outside and interacting with nature. An anxiety.org article describes it best: As research on wilderness therapy, horticultural therapy, and urban green spaces indicate, spending time in nature is associated with increased emotion regulation, decreased neural activity in the subgenual prefrontal cortex (the area associated with rumination), and decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Contrary to some beliefs, gardening can actually be quite a physical activity. Think raking, weeding, trimming or even lifting soil and potting larger plants. Exercise has been proven to decrease symptoms of anxiety and depression so that's yet another reason to consider gardening!

## Green Therapy

Green Therapy is the name given to the psychological benefits of being in nature (or natural surroundings). Gardening is but one example of green therapy. If gardening isn't to your liking, you could always go for a walk or find a park close to you.

If you have any questions about this article or need someone to talk to, you can call Arafmi any time of the day on **07 3254 1881**. It's comforting to know that when you need to talk – someone who understands will be there – at any hour.



# How Your 5 Senses Can Help When Anxiety Strikes

As a carer you may become annoyed when anxiety strikes. “I don’t have time to have an anxiety attack right now”, “of COURSE this has to happen now, I’m meant to be doing something for my loved one” or “I am so sick of these anxious moments, I wish they would just go away”.

When anxiety pays us a visit, it brings with it a sense of doom. Our hearts race, our minds get busy concocting all different awful scenarios, our breathing becomes shallow and we can sometimes feel light-headed. If you suffer anxiety, you know it is not fun.

Whatever the trigger may be, we suddenly find ourselves cocooned in a storm of feelings that nobody else can see. Whether you’re at work at your desk, or frozen at the kitchen sink, or standing at a set of lights – your stillness contradicts everything that is going on within your mind at that moment.

## What To Do

The fabulous world of the internet shows us that there are a multitude of ways to deal with anxiety. But for us, we wanted to share with you an activity that involves using your five senses and is often referred to as the ‘5-4-3-2-1 coping technique’.

This technique is designed specifically to be easy to implement and effective in drawing your attention to this moment. It helps to calm your breath, settle your thoughts and brings your mindfulness to the present.

## Let Your 5 Senses Ground You

To get started, take in a big breath from your belly:

5. See – Look around you and find five things you can see.
4. Feel – Notice four things that you can feel eg your feet in your shoes, the itch in your arm, the clothes against your skin.
3. Hear – Take note of three things you can hear. Traffic outside, the wind in the trees or your neighbours’ dog.
2. Smell – Breathe in and list two things you can smell.
1. Taste – List one thing you can taste.

Some articles will recommend that you say all these things out loud in acknowledgment. This will obviously depend on where you are, and if you’re out in public it’s probably enough for you to acknowledge them silently, to yourself.

This technique is designed specifically to be easy to implement and effective in drawing your attention to this moment. It helps to calm your breath, settle your thoughts and brings your mindfulness to the present.

## Want To Know More?

If you like this activity and would like to find other grounding activities, you can find a variety of choices if you search for the term “anxiety grounding tool” on the internet.



## Stay Connected

### Social Media

Are you following us on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn? Follow us and stay ahead of our news!

### Subscribe to our newsletter

Did you know we send out carer newsletters in hard copy as well as via email? If you'd like to subscribe to one or the other, please contact us at [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au)

### Suggestion Box

What else would you like to see in these newsletters? We want to make sure you're getting what you want. Please email [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au).

*You live most of your life inside  
of your head. Make sure it's a  
nice place to be.*

### Help us give you information that matters

Whether you have a question about something in this newsletter or a suggestion for the next edition, we'd love to hear from you.

**Call us:** 07 3254 1881

**Email us:** [info@arafmi.com.au](mailto:info@arafmi.com.au)

**Visit us online:** [www.arafmi.com.au](http://www.arafmi.com.au)

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### Do you know about our 24/7 Helpline?

When you need to talk to someone who understands, we will be there - at any hour.

**Call us:** 07 3254 1881

**24/7 National Helpline:** 1300 554 660

**Regional Queensland:** 1800 35 1881  
Free call from landline (Carer support only)

**Join the 24/7 online forum:**  
<https://arafmiqld.saneforums.org/>