

Disability Services Newsletter

General Manager Update

Wendy Pettifer

MAY 2020



May has been a positive month at Woodville Alliance. We've seen a steady stream of our clients returning to our services and it has been lovely to see them interacting with their friends and the staff again. Also, with the relaxation of some restrictions, clients have been able to get outside a little more, which has been a relief for everyone I think, even though the weather is getting much colder!

A TEMPORARY FAREWELL TO JENNA

Anyone who has seen our lovely Disability Services Manager lately cannot have failed to notice that she has a baby on the way! Jenna has done tremendously well running our services over the last few months in very challenging circumstances and has now gone on maternity leave for a much-deserved rest for a couple of weeks until her new arrival. She will be gone for 18 weeks, and in her absence Toby and the mentors will be holding the fort. We've done a huge amount of work during May to ensure that we were well prepared for Jenna's absence and I'm confident the team will do a great job.

We saw Jenna off in style with a surprise BBQ and Baby Shower. We were particularly pleased to have been able to do this for Jenna as the Baby Shower she had planned with her friends and family had to be cancelled due to COVID. The clients enjoyed making beautiful decorations and cards for Jenna and also decorated and made really lovely cupcakes which we all enjoyed!

We are now all excitedly awaiting news!

WOODVILLE ALLIANCE AND COVID 19

The situation with COVID 19 continues to improve and we are seeing a steady stream of clients returning to services. We have also welcomed a few new clients during this period, so there will be new friends for our returners to make as well. The Senior Leadership Team continue to meet on a weekly basis to discuss our organizational responses to the crisis, and all the current protections in place will continue for the foreseeable future. We will continue to take temperatures, use hand sanitizer, and promote social distancing at our centres



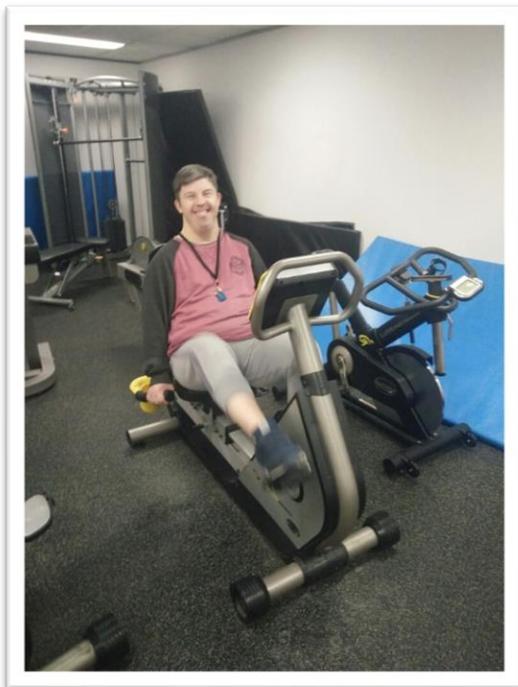
and our back office staff continue to work mainly from home to reduce the risk to them and our clients. Our hospital grade cleaning is also continuing, as is the ongoing cleaning in the centres and buses throughout the day. We have implemented robust measures for ensuring that staff do not attend work if they have even very mild symptoms of the virus and they are not permitted to return to work without a negative test.

There are some changes though – we are now able to take clients out of the centre more, and this has been very important for some clients who have struggled with the restrictions. We are also working with council to gain access back into the Chester Hill Community Centre, so that ICBO can return to normal, and I hope that this will happen during June. We will communicate directly with the families this involves once it has been resolved.

COMMUNICATING WITH WOODVILLE

I mentioned in last months newsletter that we were working on further improving our communications with you, and over the next week or so you should be receiving a useful tool to help you know who to contact about what. We've laminated the information and put it on a fridge magnet so you can easily refer to it. If you need more of them – for example for another household who are also involved in your support, please let us know and we will send out additional copies for you.

SPOTLIGHT ON SUPPORT COORDINATION



Many of you are aware of our fantastic Support Coordination team – Nargis and Elizabeth – as they work with you. We always hear very positive reports from clients and their families about the work that Elizabeth and Nargis do, and as they have been with us for around 15 years they have really expert knowledge of services and supports available for people with disability in our area. Nargis and Elizabeth are generally very busy, but currently we have some room for some new referrals, so if you are looking for a Support Coordinator or thinking about changing from another organization, please do give us a call on 0400 366 523. Remember also that until September 2020, the NDIA is allowing participants to flexibly use funds to purchase Support Coordination, even if they do not have that funding in their plans. This creates an opportunity to get some assistance with tasks you are perhaps struggling with at the moment – for example, getting the right reports together for Supported Independent Living funds approval.



NDIS REVIEWS AND THE NEW PRICE GUIDE

You may be aware that a new NDIS price guide has been released this week. This price guide contains substantial changes to the way that we are able to charge for our services. We are still assessing what the impact of the changes are to our systems and processes and to the way we quote and bill to you – and there is a lot of work to be done. I will be keeping you informed about any changes as we understand them, but it does raise the importance again of ensuring you have spoken to us about any upcoming reviews and asked us for a quote for our services. If you do not do this, it is likely that you will receive an amount that reflects what has been received previously – and with the changes to pricing structures and what we are able to bill it's unlikely that this amount will cover our current charges. This might mean we have to tailor your services to the amount of funding you have been awarded, and it could mean a reduction in hours. If we work together, we can get the best outcome for everyone.



LAUNCH OF SATURDAY SOCIAL

Saturday should always be a fun day, and during the COVID crisis we have not been operating our fortnightly Leisure Link. Now things have settled down, we have decided to restart weekend services and rename the service 'Saturday Social'. The name 'Leisure Link' relates to a type of Government funding that has long since disappeared and we thought it was time for a change. The service will run every Saturday and will be a mix of fun things in the centre and outings into the community. We are committed to ensuring that our weekend support is as fun and exciting as possible, but of course at the moment there are still some restrictions. We will release a program of activities as soon as we are able to more fully get out and about, but if you are interested in attending and have funding available, please get in touch with Toby on 0490 048 284.

ACTIVITIES IN JUNE

COVID 19 has made it a little bit more challenging to organize activities etc, but it's been doubly important to keep everyone busy. During June we have some activities related to the Queen's Birthday and we continue to be providing dance lessons and exercise sessions with our external teachers via Zoom. As clients return to the centre we are also conscious that parents are at different stages of anxiety about the virus and how it impacts the person they care for, so if you have any concerns about particular types of activities please do let us know. We want to work with you and for you to feel as confident as possible about what we are doing.

We are looking forward to eventually being able to restart our evening programs – getting everyone dancing and getting the NightOwls out and about again, but we still need to be cautious. We will keep you posted!

Best wishes

Wendy

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