



AUGUST 2024

Adelaide Adult ADHD Newsletter

Adelaide Adult ADHD is a community and a voice for adults with ADHD.

Dear all,

We are pleased to provide you with the **August 2024 Adelaide Adult ADHD newsletter** which you can also read [online here](#).

In August we attended the [TheMHS Learning Network Conference 2024](#) in Canberra, including presenting a [poster](#) about the use of social media and other digital tools for supporting the lived experience of adult ADHD. A report on this experience will be included in the September newsletter.

Our main story this month, which we are so grateful for and thrilled to share, is a guest article by [Taimi Allan - South Australia's Mental Health Commissioner](#).

Taimi Allan grew up in SA and experienced mental health challenges as a young woman. Her recovery inspired a 20-year mental health career in New Zealand where her award-winning work and passionate advocacy as a “wellbeing warrior” has already driven plenty of positive change. This global mental health leader has brought her knowledge and experience back home. Since last 30 October 2023 Taimi has taken the helm as full-time Mental Health Commissioner of South Australia, embracing the power of lived experience to reshape our state’s mental health discussions.

Please feel free to share this newsletter. Take care.

EMBRACING ADHD: ADVOCACY WITH EMPATHY AND HUMOUR

Taimi Allan, South Australian Mental Health Commissions

Living with ADHD in a family where everyone has it is like being part of a superhero squad, each with unique strengths and challenges. While ADHD can sometimes feel like a whirlwind of distractions and impulsivity, it also brings incredible creativity, hyperfocus, and a knack for thinking outside the box.

Advocating for ourselves, especially in a world that often misunderstands ADHD, requires a diplomatic touch. We need to build bridges, not walls. While activism can sometimes come across as confrontational, advocacy focuses on understanding and collaboration. It's about sharing our stories authentically, without painting others as villains to build empathy and find common ground.

One key difference between advocacy and activism is the way we frame our stories. Activism often involves identifying an antagonist, which can lead to a sense of division and defensiveness. In contrast, advocacy seeks to address issues without casting blame, focusing instead on the barriers and challenges we face and painting those who can influence change as allies and heroes in finding solutions. This approach allows us to connect with others, even those who may initially seem like obstacles, by recognising our shared humanity.

As someone with ADHD serving as the Mental Health Commissioner, I see ADHD as a superpower. It's not just about having a hundred tabs open at a time; it's about the unique ability to see and explain the big picture while simultaneously juggling all the smaller pieces. This skill is crucial in crafting a vision of a society that understands each other better, acts with kindness and compassion, stops judgment and "othering," and knows how to support our own and others' distress.

In our superhero family, each of us has our own unique abilities: **The Human Jukebox**, my husband, is a musician and composer who can play every instrument, captivating both 9-day-old babies and 90-year-old elders alike. His ability to bring joy and connection through music is truly magical. **The Cinema Crusader**, our son, is a filmmaker and storyteller with a strong sense of social justice. He uses his films to educate audiences, blending education with entertainment to inspire and inform. **The Artistic Avenger**, our daughter, is an artistic soul who can draw and create in three dimensions. Her resilience and strong will make her a formidable force, one day potentially even in the political arena. Together, we navigate the world with our unique ADHD superpowers, celebrating our strengths and facing our challenges head-on.

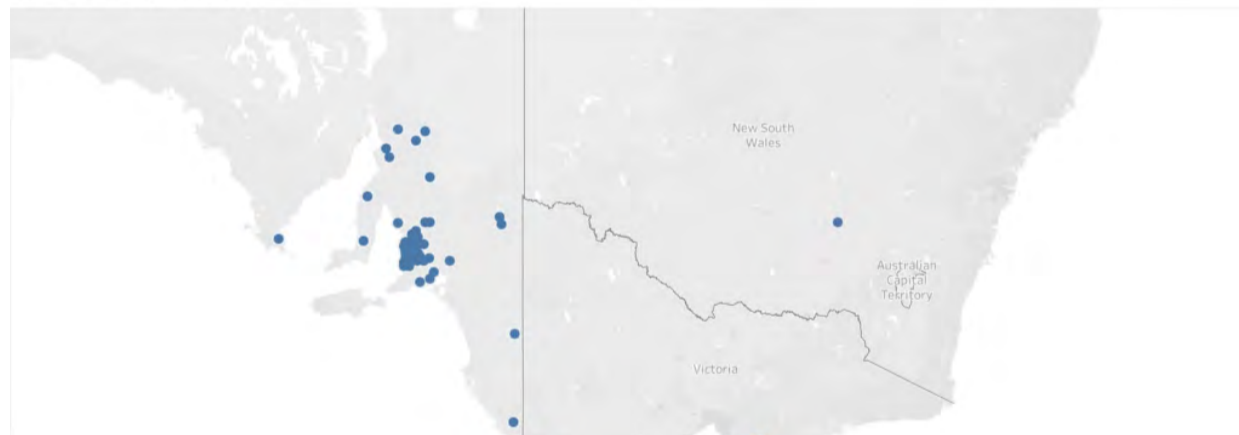
For all of us though in ADHD-land, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of neurodiversity, recognising that our stories are not just about overcoming obstacles but also celebrating the resilience, creativity, and unique perspectives we all bring to the table is essential. And sharing what works between us as a community is a powerful tool that's just as important as that “find my phone” app we need to use several times a day!

As humans, we like to celebrate uniqueness, but can equally fall into the “us” and “them” trap. Instead, by making an intentional effort to walk in each other's shoes, we can make sure that all of us find the confidence to lean into our superpowers.

Ngaityalya (Thank you in Kurna)

WHERE YOUR ADULT ADHD COMMUNITY IS

Number of responses: 204



Help us, and help others, understand you and your community.

Learning about the people who make up this community can help reduce feelings of isolation, and build a voice for support for adults with ADHD.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY](#)

[BE PART OF THE PICTURE](#)

(completely anonymously)

MEMBER STORY

[SHARE YOURS](#)

SELF-ADVOCACY

Thank you to community member, Johanna, for sharing her story about making her way through the parallel challenges of adult ADHD, education and work. Johanna's full story, including her very courageous self-advocacy through the Australian Federal Court, is available on the [website](#).

'I spent my formative years in remote areas of the Northern Territory in the 1980's and child psychologist and psychiatrists were rare. I struggled controlling my emotions and at school academically. Throughout my life I have had trouble making interpersonal connections, having a stable relationship, and holding down a job. Medication was life changing. I enrolled back into university and graduated with a Bachelor of Laws in 2020 and then admitted into the Supreme court. I was then accepted into a graduate program with a government department that supports neurodivergent employees. Today I have a good job, saving money and contributing to my super. I am happily married with stable, secure accommodation. All new accomplishments for me at the age of 47.'

NEW ON THE ADELAIDE ADULT ADHD WEBSITE

Tech Tactics for ADHD Minds: Building Your Career on Innovation

Patrick Young is an educator and activist in the US who reached out to us with an offer to put together an article for your site on ways people with disabilities can use technology in their career search. You can find out more about Patrick and his work on his website, [AbleUSA.info](#) and you can read the [article](#) he wrote for us on our notice. Thank you, Patrick!

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