



SEPTEMBER 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 **September 2024 Adelaide Adult ADHD newsletter** which you can also read [online here](#).

Please feel free to share this newsletter. Take care.

ONE-WAY KINDNESS

This month I'm reflecting on how we each look after our adult ADHD community, and how we look after ourselves. I've recently stepped back from a project that is very meaningful to me because I felt I was letting everyone down by not being 100% present - feeling guilty at work for not being home with my family, feeling guilty at home for not working on my project, feeling guilty while working on my project for taking time away from my job. Feeling afraid of the consequences of each failure. And, of course, the reason I couldn't balance those things is clearly (to me) that I'm not smart enough, hard working enough or tough enough.

I am fortunate that the people I have been working with on the project in question are some of the kindest human beings I have ever come across and have been nothing but caring and supportive. Which, perversely, makes me feel even worse for letting them down.

I realise this situation is not unique to the adult ADHD experience, but perhaps my ADHD means I am not well equipped to manage the emotions arising from these conflicts. And it certainly raises my risk of turning to coping strategies that range from unhelpful to high risk, which in turn puts the things and people I love at risk.

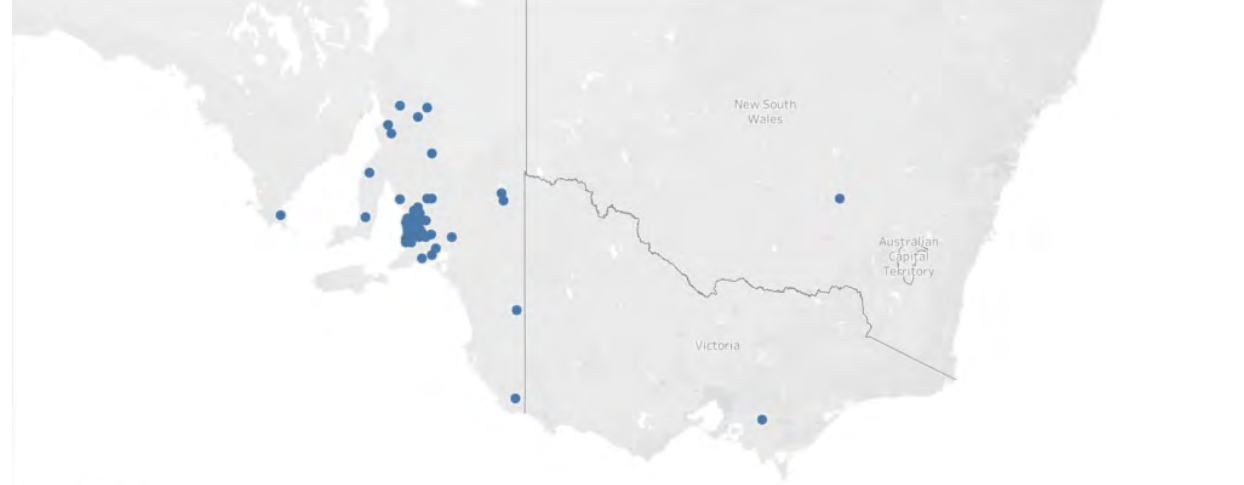
At the same time as I am managing my own experience, I am aware that people around me are facing their own challenges. I tell them to cut themselves some slack, to be proud of their own achievements, to be respectful of their own needs, to recognise how much they are admired, to celebrate every success no matter how small, to forgive themselves for their mistakes and to honour the times they did things because that was all they knew or were able to do.

I try to tell myself these things, but I don't believe me. I argue that I am lazy, weak, stupid, unreliable and selfish.

My reflection on all this is to ask you all to be as kind to yourselves as you are to each other. I see so many examples of this community supporting one another with kindness and compassion. Please extend the same kindness and compassion to yourselves. I know it's hard. I will keep trying. I hope you will too.

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)

2024 TheMHS Conference report

Adelaide Adult ADHD attended the lived experience forum of the 2024 TheMHS Conference in Canberra in August. This was only possible due to the generosity (financial, emotional and logistical) of family for which we are endlessly grateful.

The forum was a 1 day opportunity to hear from consumers and carers with lived experience of mental health challenges, as well as researchers in the field. It was quite an emotional rollercoaster, because you can't talk about how to make things better without first talking about what's wrong. There were stories of great courage, wisdom and brilliance as well as great sadness, injustice and misjudgement. But the overall message was one of solidarity, determination and hope. Some highlights are shared below.

Mental illness stigma

[Dr Chris Groot](#), who leads the Mental Illness Stigma Lab in the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences at the University of Melbourne, presented his research into the stigma and discrimination that surround mental illness. While acknowledging that the challenge is significant, Dr Groot's research suggests that it is not insurmountable. A particularly interesting topic was the impact of medicalising mental health - is it helpful or harmful to consider mental illness as a medical condition? The research suggests that in some cases it can reduce stigma as it allows society to separate the behaviour from the person and so reduce the 'blame' placed on individuals. In other cases medicalisation of mental illness can encourage discrimination by implying that individuals are dangerous due to being at the mercy of their medical condition. As always, with research, the investigation continues but it's good news that the research is being done.

The lived experience imbalance

A panel explored ideas around partnerships between consumers, carers, and service providers. [Terri Warner](#), a PhD candidate at the Australian National University, identified 3 key imbalances in the experience of being a lived experience representative in any mental health partnership.

1. Information imbalance - even with the best intentions and efforts, lived experience representative rarely have access to the same depth and breadth of information that professionals do, such as legislation, clinical knowledge and access to influential people.
2. Right of exit - lived experience partners do not have a choice about whether to engage with mental health challenges, while professionals (recognising the some may, of course, also have mental health lived experiences) can enter or exit the mental health arena as their interests and comfort levels dictate.
3. Power imbalance - again, even with the best intentions and efforts, to be a lived experience representative in a partnership with people with qualifications, job titles and other symbols of power can make even the most confident individual feel intimidated.

Lived experience in the arts

3 talented artists shared the way their lived experiences of mental health challenges shaped and are shaped by their art. [Ben Drysale](#) performed excerpts from his musical compositions, [Shauna Winram](#) showed a clip from her play 'Van Gogh's Boots: A guided tour through psychosis', and [Liam Adams](#) read from his self-published novels 'The Librarian Saga'.

- [INFORMATION AND SERVICES](#)
- [COMMUNITY](#)
- [WHO WE ARE](#)

