



The Connecting Link

GROW NSW/ACT REGION NEWSLETTER

HIGHLY COMMENDED IN MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS AWARDS



Congratulations to Regional Manager Dave McLoughlin (pictured above) whose outstanding contribution to advocacy and social change benefiting people with lived experience of mental illness is recognised by this award, with specific reference to his long-term dedication to the Grow program. Congratulations and thanks for all you have done and continue to do for the Grow community Dave!

Regional Office will be closed for Christmas break from Monday 21 Dec and will reopen on Monday 4 January.

HORNSBY GROUP WIN BEST EXHIBIT IN ART FOR THE HEART 2020

Hornsby Grow group have won best exhibit in Grow's inaugural virtual Art for the Heart Exhibition with a multimedia video entitled "The rough road to true colours". Originally meant to be a physical art gallery experience held at the Grow Community Centre in Melbourne, a new vision emerged due to the COVID-19 lockdown, of a virtual exhibition showcasing the creative talents of all Growers across Australia. In creating their entry, the Hornsby group have stretched their artistic muscles and limbs with guidance via Zoom by member Anita, a retired Art Teacher. Below are some images taken from the video. You can see the full video and check out the other amazing artworks of Growers at the digital gallery <https://grow.org.au/art-for-the-heart-digital-gallery/>.



GROW
mental wellbeing programs



Grow is a free, community-based peer support program for improving and maintaining mental wellbeing. For more information or to find a Grow group near you call 1800 558 268 or visit www.grow.org.au

Merry Christmas from the



BRANCH PROGRAM TEAM

"Each person's recovery or growth aids the transformation of the world"

Dear Growers,

As the new Chair of the NSW Branch Program Team (BPT) I'd like to wish you all a very good Festive Season! All around us the images of happy faces, gathering of families and the right food with it are telling us that Christmas is on its way. It can be quite hard for some of us to think everybody's situation is a happy one which is as we know, not true. 2020 was not such a Happy Year for everybody! Bushfires with loss of houses and huge amount of wild animals, then the COVID-19 Virus which is still hanging over us, are still taking its toll!

We Growers as part of the whole community are suffering as well. However don't despair!

The connection with our Grow groups, the friends we made, and the wisdom in the Blue Book are our starting point. Over this Season, it is important that we don't isolate, keep contact with our friends and use the "Christmas Wellness Plan" to look after our mental health. Above all, keep believing in the growth each of us makes as human beings knowing that "Each person's recovery or growth aids the transformation of the world" (Grow Principle of Universal Benefit pg 84 of the Blue Book).

In Grow Friendship
Sigrid Staender-Challender



CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL MANAGER - DAVE M



Dear Growers,

We are finishing the year with some great things to announce and celebrate. Firstly, I'm pleased to announce that Sigrid (Lismore Tues Group) has accepted her nomination to the role of Chairperson of the GROW NSW/ACT Branch Program Team. Thanks for stepping up Sigrid. Your sound knowledge of the Program and determination will put the team in good stead. I look forward to seeing you grow into this important role.

Secondly I have pleasure in sharing with you the very exciting news of our most recent addition to the staff team in NSW, Justin Carr will start work with us from the 8th December as our new Program Worker in the Greater Sydney region and will be working closely with Rebecca Macdonald to support and develop the leadership within our Metro O&R team. Justin brings with him over 15 years of Grow experience and leadership and I hope you will join me in welcoming him aboard.

Also, in the ACT part of our Branch we have appointed a full time Residential Program Worker to work with Lee Hardisty at our Narrabundah Residential Program. Welcome aboard Chris. I'm sure your wealth of experience in the mental health sector and expertise in physical fitness training will aid the recovery and rehabilitation of our Growers at the residential. As we come to the close of a very interesting and challenging year I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and also all the best for the coming new year. Please take care of each other and stay safe and may "the best in life and love and happiness be ahead of us".

In Grow Friendship
Dave McLoughlin



HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WELLNESS PLAN FOR THE HOLIDAYS YET?

A wellness plan is a great way to take responsibility for your looking after our own mental wellbeing over the holiday period. Download a copy of the Christmas Wellness plan from this link

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/48ipzoinhwe02qn/Christmas%20Wellness%20Plan.pdf?dl=0> or ask your group organiser. Fill in the plan with the help of your Grow group or a friend that knows you well and keep it in a place where you can see it over the Christmas period.

Social pages

THE GROW CARING, SHARING COMMUNITY

Submit your group stories and photos to eastregion.admin@grow.org.au



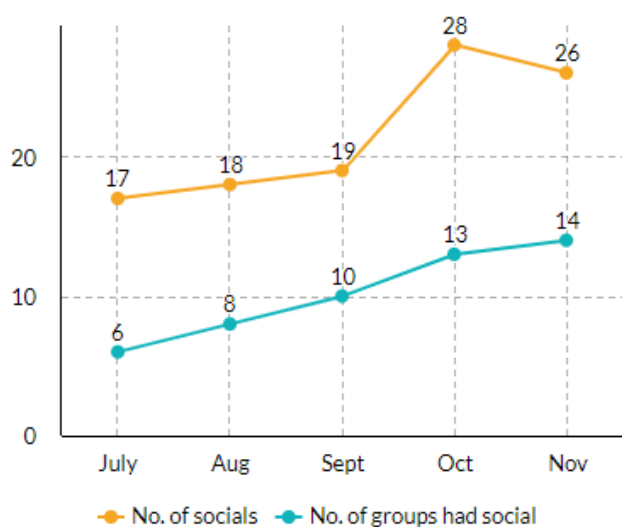
HANG OUT YOUR WASHING



Recently the Lismore Tuesday group enjoyed a social together by visiting the "Hang Out Your Washing" art exhibition at the Lismore Serpentine Gallery. Artists Kate Hay and Elspeth Jones created the exhibition to encourage people to talk openly about their mental health rather than worrying about "hanging out dirty linen for the neighbours to see". Lismore Grower Shane is pictured above enjoying the exhibition.

How are we growing as a caring sharing community?

NSW/ACT Group Socials



Sydney Metro End of Year Social

December 13 from 4:30pm

Meet at Concord West Playground,
Bicentennial Park.
BYO everything (no sharing due to COVID-19)

Contact 0407792400

TRIVIA SOCIAL

Meeting ID:
957 8228 1462
Password:
571270

Every Friday 3-4pm via Zoom

Quiz Master Dave Bolden

No Trivia 25 Dec or Jan 1

<https://zoom.us/j/95782281462?pwd=R2hiVHJ5aEFXM3R6SUQxbVRNSGI5QT09>

One way we keep growing as a caring sharing community is by having regular group socials.



Well done to the following groups who held one or more socials in November

- Ballina, Bateau Bay, Bathurst, Griffith, Lismore Tues, Miranda, Narrabundah, Nowra Tues, Nowra Thur, Orange, Port Macquarie, West Ryde, Wyong, Yamba

GROUP CHRISTMAS CLOSURE DATES



Southern & Western Region

Northern Region

Ballina, Fri 11am closed Dec 25 reopens Jan 8
Bateau Bay, Thur 10:30 closed Dec 24 reopens Jan 7
Lismore, Tue 10am staying open via zoom
Lismore, Wed 6pm staying open via zoom
Maitland, Thur 10am closed Dec 17 reopens Jan 21
Port Macq, Tue 10:30am closed Dec 29 reopens Jan 12
Tweed, Mon 10am closed Dec 21 reopens Jan 4
Woy Woy, Mon 6:30pm staying open via zoom
Wyong, Tue 11am staying open via zoom
Yamba, Mon 10:30am closed Dec 14 reopens Jan 11

Metro Region

Blacktown, Wed 6:30pm in recess
Burwood, Tue 6:30pm staying open via zoom
Camperdown, Mon 6:30pm staying open via zoom
Chatswood, Tue 6:30pm closed Dec 29 reopens Jan 12
Hornsby, Thur 6:30pm closed Dec 24 reopens Jan 7
Lidcombe, Thur 6:30pm closed Dec 24 reopens Jan 7
Miranda, Mon 1:30pm closed Dec 28 reopens Jan 4
Mt Druitt, Fri 1pm closed Dec 25 reopens Jan 8
Newtown, Wed 1:15pm staying open via zoom
Penrith, Thur 10:30am closed Dec 24 reopens Jan 7
West Ryde, Fri 12:15pm closed Dec 25 reopens Jan 8

Bathurst, Tue 2pm closed Dec 29 reopens Jan 19
Belconnen, Mon 1:30pm closed Dec 21 reopens Jan 4
Broken Hill, Wed 6pm in recess
Cowra, Wed 2pm closed Dec 16 reopens Jan 13
Dubbo, Thur 12:30pm closed Dec 24 reopens Jan 14
Griffith, Tue 6pm staying open via zoom
Leeton, Thur 10:30am closed Dec 24 reopen Jan 14
Narrabundah, Mon (Residents) staying open
Narrabundah Thurs 5.30pm closed Dec 24 reopen Jan 7
Nowra, Tue 6pm closed Dec 29 reopens Jan 12
Nowra, Thur 1pm staying open via zoom
Orange, Fri 2pm closed Dec 25 reopens Jan 15
Queanbeyan, Tue 5:30pm closed Dec 22 reopens Jan 4
Warrarong, Wed 1pm closed Dec 30 reopens Jan 6



Keep in Contact over Christmas

If your group is closing over Christmas, make sure you have the numbers of group members so you can keep in contact with 12th step calls. You could also plan to visit a group that is staying open via Zoom.

Call Kylie on 1800 558 268 or email eastregion.admin@grow.org.au before Friday December 18 to get the details of the meeting you would like to attend.

UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

SATURDAY 12 DECEMBER



LEADERSHIP TOPIC - How gratitude helps our mental health

Leadership meetings are where the Grow program continues to be developed by Growers writing leadership papers and helping each other to grow in leadership. Ask your group organiser for more details.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER BIMONTHLY AND ATTENDANCE FORMS

DUE BY 8 JANUARY (PLEASE SUBMIT BEFORE BREAKING FOR CHRISTMAS)

NEXT ORGANISERS AND RECORDERS MEETING SATURDAY 16 JANUARY

FEBRUARY

ANNUAL ELECTIONS OF ORGANISERS AND RECORDERS



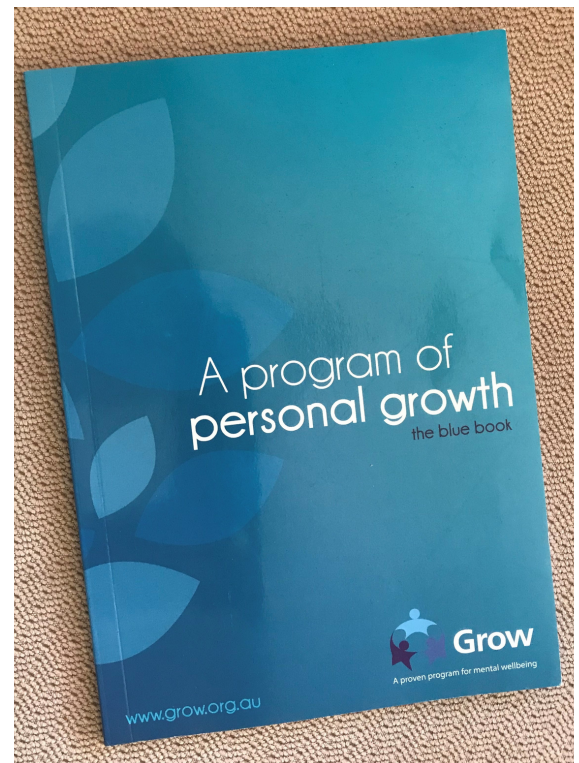
zoom

Check out the Zoom etiquette guide for tips on what to do (and what not to do) to help your Grow meeting run well via Zoom.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/e59l82jzq5muaxrv7hj1b/Zoom-Etiquette.docx?dl=0&rlkey=7gnvp5w2t2n4n5ct198hee5cb>

The 12 Steps of Recovery and Personal Growth

1. We admitted to personal disorder in our lives.
2. We firmly resolved to restore order in our lives and cooperated with the help that we needed.
3. We surrendered to the healing power of God or
We surrendered to the healing power of truth.
4. We made personal inventory and accepted ourselves.
5. We made moral inventory and cleaned out our hearts.
6. We endured until cured.
7. We took care and control of our bodies.
8. We learned to think by reason rather than by feelings and imagination.
9. We trained our wills to regulate our feelings.
10. We took our responsible and caring place in the wider community.
11. We grew daily closer to maturity.
12. We carried GROW's hopeful and healing message to others in need.



Reindeer Cookies



INGREDIENTS

Crème Filled Chocolate Cookies, Mini Twist Pretzels, Mini Marshmallows, Mini Chocolate Chips, Chocolate Almond Bark, Candy Coated Chocolate Filled Candies

INSTRUCTIONS

Break a mini twist pretzel in half and insert the pretzel pieces into the crème filling of the chocolate cookie.
Melt the chocolate almond bark according to the directions on the package. Lightly dip just the very bottom of two mini marshmallows into the melted almond bark and place the marshmallows on top of a cookie.
Carefully dip just the bottom of the mini chocolate chips and candy coated chocolate filled candies into the melted chocolate and 'adhere' them onto the chocolate cookie. Allow to set

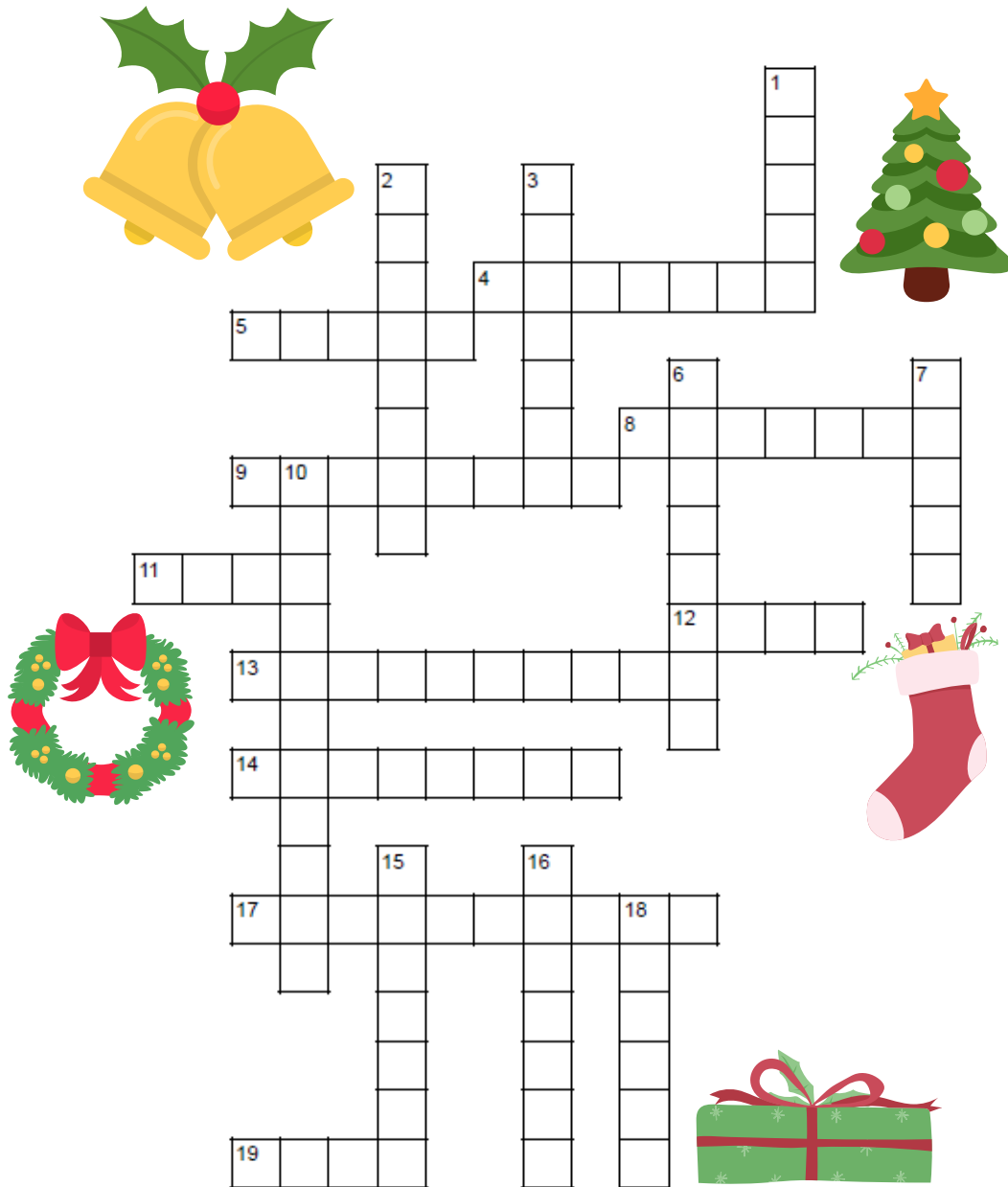


Helpful contacts

Lifeline 13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Services 1300 659 467
Mental Health Line 1800 011 511
Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
Mindspot 1800 614 434
Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
Mensline Australia 1300 789 978
Blue Knot Foundation Helpline 1300 657 380
1800RESPECT 1800 555 677
Black Dog Institute <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>



Grow Wisdoms



Across

- 4 I am more _____ than vulnerable
- 5 A friend is as near as the nearest _____
- 8 No one is a _____
- 9 Settle for _____ in the lesser things
- 11 mutual _____
- 12 _____ are healing
- 13 _____ is not a feeling but an attitude of mind
- 14 Don't be an emotional _____ be a person
- 17 Tell the _____ to someone
- 19 The lowest ebb is the turn of the _____

Down

- 1 personal _____
- 2 When someone pays you a compliment, say _____ and shut up
- 3 Have the _____ to make mistakes
- 6 Mental health can't be taught, it has to be learned _____
- 7 Don't use a bulldozer when a _____ will do
- 10 constant _____
- 15 Carry the _____ not the person
- 16 The comforting _____
- 18 the choicest part of growing up is growing _____