

EDITORIAL NOTE

# let's be ~~vi~~covid

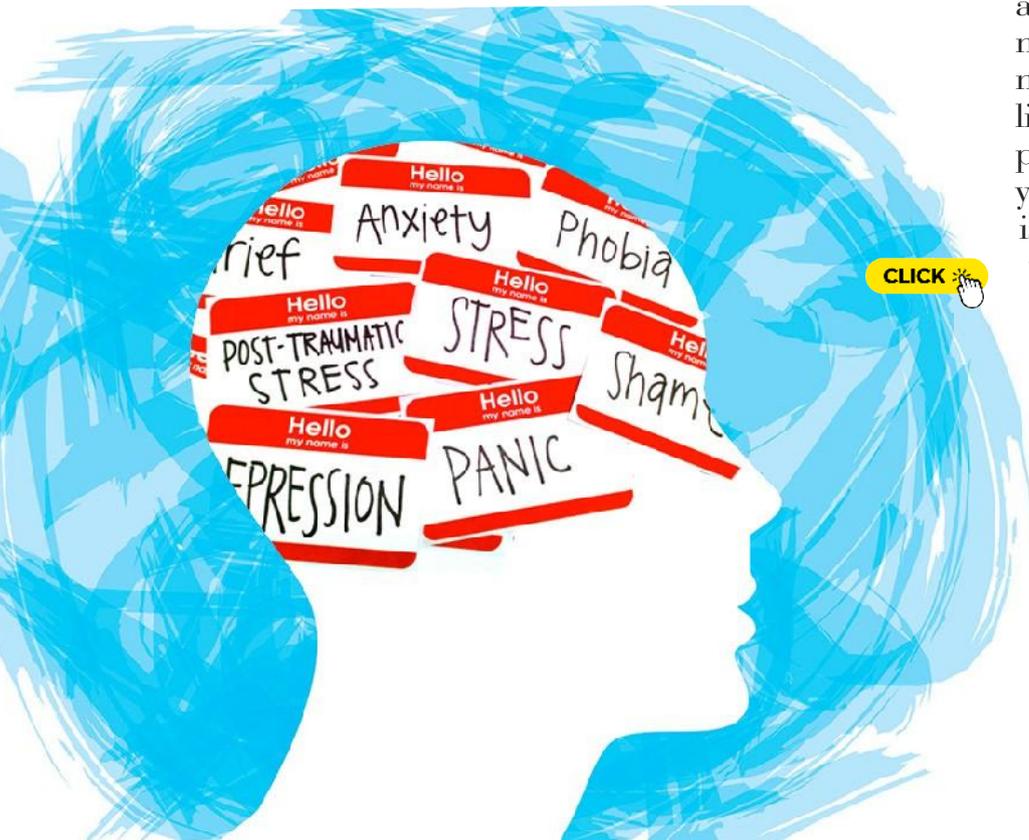


*daniela*

**A**nother day is over. I feel exhausted. I haven't managed to finish all on my today's to do list! I feel tired! How long is this black cloud going to haunt my days?

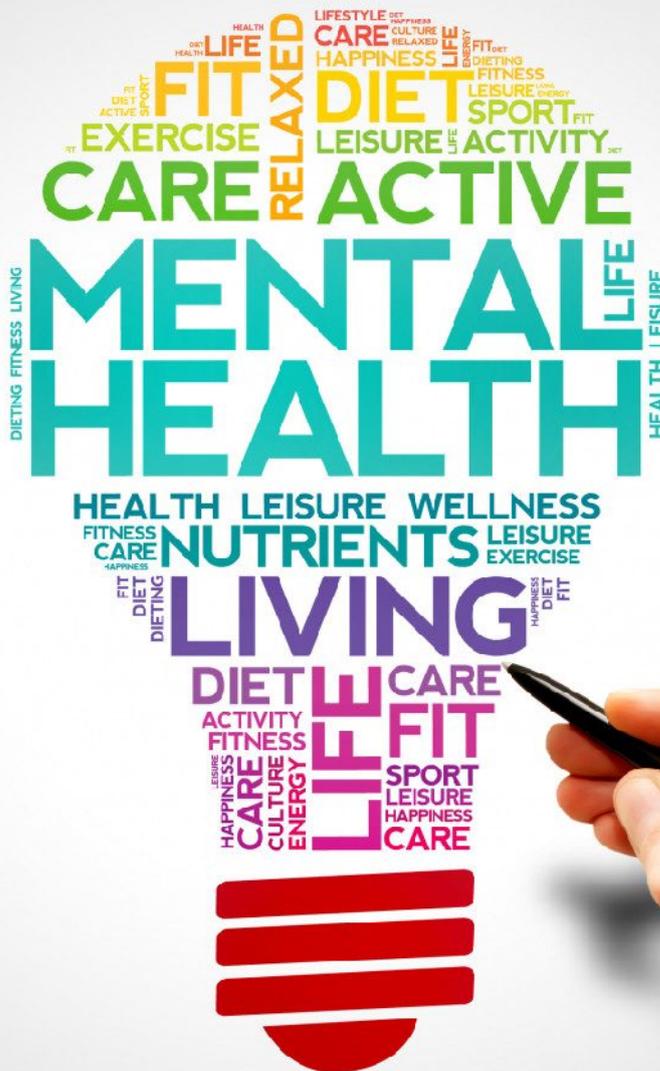
I am sure that we are all feeling this in one way or another. We are now feeling the weight of the past months and fatigue symptoms are much more visible. However, as the saying goes, if you want to see the rainbow you have to put up with the rain. So, "*Breathe! It's just a bad day not a bad life!*"

(Anon.). October marks mental health awareness and what better timing to promote the importance of taking care of one's well-being, both physically but most importantly mentally. When all that surrounds us is dull and sterile, we feel an inner pull to seek that dash of positivity; a sprinkle of kind words, an uplifting moment such as a friendly chat or a thoughtless run. Do not think big. The greatness of the gesture lies in its simplicity! Being aware of one's own and of others mental health is crucial to fight the present stigma about mental health illnesses. We need to talk openly about it and not behind closed doors, to actively listen to others, to not fear its presence and to seek help when you identify any symptoms. Here is a very strong but true-to-life video to help us be more aware of those around us and be sensitive to the needs of others. Let's be Vivid and let's talk about it!



Mental health refers to a state of social, physical and mental well-being which can be affected by biological, individual and social influences and perspectives (WHO ICF 2001). [CLICK](#)

The Royal College of Speech Language Therapist (RCSLT) provides us with an overview of what mental health refers to and how Speech Language Pathologists are a crucial link in this chain.



## Managing the COVID-19 Challenge

**Speaker: Dr Claudette Portelli**

Ph.D Clinical Psychologist, Coach & Trainer Specialised in Brief Strategic Therapy

**Date: Thursday 29th October | Time: 18:00-19:30**

**Fee: Members free | €2 non members**

**Open to SLPs, other professionals and educators**



**WEBINAR**

Book your place on [info@aslpmalta.org](mailto:info@aslpmalta.org)



What is the correlation between having a communication difficulties and mental health illness? In this short brief **GERTRUDE BUTTIGIEG** highlights the strong association between these two, while also focusing on the important role that a Speech Language Pathologist holds in this matter.

Gertrude Buttigieg holds a Masters in Health Services Management following a first degree in BSc Communication Therapy. Ms Buttigieg has worked as an SLP since 1995. In 2013 she moved to the position of consulting officer within the Office of the Commissioner for Mental Health. Gertrude Buttigieg has also been extensively involved in the sector and she has participated as speaker and participant in several conferences locally and abroad.



## To what extent do mental health issues affect a person?

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health. The Day provides an opportunity for

all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide. (WHO, 2020).

Psychiatric conditions are the leading cause of disability in young people, research indicates that 10-20% of children and adolescents experience mental disorders, while 50% of lifetime mental illness begins before the age of 14 years. 80% of lifetime mental illness arise by mid-twenties.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and social and behavioural difficulties and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or hyperkinetic disorder are classified under clinical psychiatric syndromes by WHO (2008). The relationship between communication difficulties and these conditions is not questionable although it varies from individual to individual. But is there a relationship with other communication difficulties?

Hollo (2012) estimated that more than half of the children diagnosed with Language Impairment (LI) as having Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD). Reversely she claims that 4 out of 5 children with EBD manifest unidentified LI. Gog Kok Yew & O’Kearney (2013) in their meta-analyses of 19 controlled prospective studies, attribute LI as increasing the risk for EBD, including depression, anxiety, conduct disorders and disruptive behaviours. Studies associated LI with EBD to the fact that these children may experience teasing and bullying due to their poor speech and as a reaction they may develop low self-esteem and exhibit poor

behaviour as a means of overcoming their poor communication abilities. Conti-Ramsden et al (2013) looked at a self-reported social, emotional and behavioural functioning assessment, they concluded that LI adolescents reported more EBD and more difficulties with peer relations than their typically developing peers. They found that LI cohort displayed borderline/abnormal prosocial behaviour (defined as positive socialisation with peers).

This is only a summary of loads of research where a strong relationship between LI and MH problems seems to emerge with consistency at an early age and then remains present to varying degrees. Studies seem to agree that LI children experience a higher predisposition to emotional, behavioural, attention and hyperactivity problems.

As SLPs can we make a difference? The importance of early diagnosis and intervention through a multidisciplinary team approach is the primary recommendation however that the multidisciplinary support continues during adolescence and through adult life in order to increase their potential success in life as functional individuals in society. As with other developmental disorders, the long-term MH of individuals with LI is clearly a significant issue to be looked at and the adequate and timely SLP intervention can make a significant difference to a person’s life.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING FOR OLDER ADULTS**  
DEALING WITH CHANGES & TRAUMA DURING COVID-19

**THINGS OLDER ADULTS CAN DO:**

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media.** Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.** Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Call **1770** if you would like psychological support or **1772** if you are feeling lonely at any time of the day or night. You are not alone!

**LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM**

**Why?** Older adults, especially in isolation and those with cognitive decline/dementia, may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated and withdrawn during the outbreak or while in quarantine.

**How?** If you are a relative or somebody close to an older adult, consider regularly reaching out to them. Where possible, make use of video calls so as to provide them with the opportunity to see you. Where not possible, consider reaching out to them by telephone. Make this part of your routine in a consistent manner provides older adults with something very valuable to look forward to. If you are a healthcare professional who follows up an older person, consider also providing intervention and support remotely. Share simple facts about what is going on and give clear information about how to reduce risk of infection. Be patient and consider using visual aids to help you.

Sources: WHO, BPS, CDC

**"To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors." – Tia Walker**

Call 1770 for 24/7 Psychological Support

**Psychology Department**  
Mental Health Services Malta

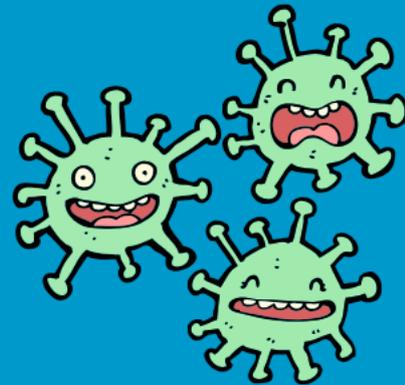
We are here for you!

The virus that causes COVID-19 is in a family of viruses called Coronaviridae. Antibiotics do not work against viruses. Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a healthcare provider. There is currently no licensed medication to cure COVID-19. If you have symptoms, call your health care provider or COVID-19 hotline for assistance.



#Coronavirus #COVID19

**FACT:**  
COVID-19 is caused  
by a virus,  
NOT by bacteria



CLICK

## PECS Level 2 training

Few years back ASLP had offered a training course in PECS Level 1. It was a huge success. Hence, ASLP is proudly announcing the following training courses for SLPs and other professionals. Completion of PECS Level 1 training is a prerequisite for PECS Level 2 training. Participants can apply for 'Transitioning from PECS to SGDs' course without certification of PECS1 although we have been informed that they might find it difficult to follow as it is delivered with the assumption that people have a basic knowledge of PECS1 & some

experience with it. For more info kindly send an email on [info@aslpmalta.org](mailto:info@aslpmalta.org)

### PECS Level 2 Training (2 day training)

Dates: 30th November and 1st December

Time: 8:30 - 16:30

### Transitioning from PECS to Speech Generating Devices (1 day training)

Date: 9th December

Time: 8:30 - 16:30



Announces the following **ONLINE** training courses



#### PECS - Level 2 Training

30th November & 1st December 2020

8.30 TO 16.30

#### Transitioning from PECS to Sound Generating Devices

1 day workshop

9th December 2020

8.30 TO 16.30



Limited number of places available

Closing date for applications 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

Contact [info@aslpmalta.org](mailto:info@aslpmalta.org) for further details

# Let's meet... CLAUDINE ZERAFA

*Q. When did you graduate and how long have you been involved in ASLP?*

I graduated in 1997 and if I recall correctly joined ASLP as a member upon graduation. I have formed part of the committee since 2015.

*Q. What is/were your roles in ASLP?*

In 2015 I joined the Committee as CPD/event organiser and in the last AGM was nominated as Vice President.

*Q. What is ASLP for you or what drew you to ASLP?*

ASLP for me is a much needed professional body which advocates for the profession, gives the profession a voice and creates unification across its members. As an Association it maintains high standards and paves the way forward for the profession in several areas. As an association we have come a long way and we are constantly coming up with new ideas which we wish to put into action but as therapists we are well aware that 'we are therapists and not magicians' and that, I believe, is the biggest challenge. We are a voluntary organisation and I am proud to be part of this exciting team.

*Q. What is your area of special interest in SLP?*

I furthered my studies obtaining a Masters degree in Clinical Education and also obtained a diploma in Public Management which are both of particular interest to me. These two areas helped me to explore different skills outside the clinical skills obtained in my first degree.

*Q. What do you like most about being a SLP?*

No two clients are the same despite even the same diagnosis. It gives the SLP the opportunity to work in an ever changing environment. The learning never ends and although this can be seen as both a positive and negative to the job I see it as a positive. The field of speech therapy is ever changing and we have the opportunity to learn more, to specialise, to empower parents, to see progress in clients, to educate students, to incorporate managerial skills...the versatility of being an SLP is endless and one that keeps me going.



*Q. What are your non-SLP skills?*

Trail running.

*Q. What are your hobbies?*

Baking, travelling and yoga.

# RESOURCES FOR SLPs, PARENTS and KIDS



These are very difficult times for all of us, even for young kids. It is very hard for kids to express themselves and recognize their emotions. This link provides a very sweet short **video** and accompanying activities all focusing on emotions and feeling

**CLICK** 



Mindfulness is a very relevant technique that can be used from kids and adults to take care of one's well-being and mental health. This **link** provides interesting information and activities that can be used by the whole family.

This short **video** opens discussion on what is mental health and what symptoms to look out for mental health illnesses! Reach out for your family, friends and loved ones and seek help! A very useful tool to use with young adults.



## INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE

*“Tough times never last, but tough people do!” – Robert Schuller*

