

EDITORIAL NOTE

let's be ~~covid~~ *vi*vid



daniela

As the days unfold into weeks and weeks into months, we find ourselves indulging into the 8th edition of *Let's be vivid*. It's been a learning journey from when the idea of this newsletter was conceived, and still is today. The air we are breathing is different from that first day. Some might say it is lighter, as the heavy COVID-19 cloud seems to be drifting away, others might still claim that it is still unbreathable and full of uncertainty. I cannot but agree to both statements and in the midst of allowing oneself to digest all this, I cannot but look forward. Earlier on, I mentioned a

journey, that journey that drives a person to pursue one's dream, that journey that boosts a person to fight for one's happiness, that journey that we all keep on living even though no one knows what is in store for us in the day we call tomorrow.

Let's be vivid is also on a journey, which it will continue pursuing in the coming weeks and months. One might observe some difference in its content, but keep your hopes up, it is a just difference, just in time to start twisting it and moulding it into the events of our everyday life, and why not, as part of our new normality.



The Association of Speech-Language Pathologists presents

Living with Parkinson's Disease

Introducing methods for an improved quality of life

Target audience: Professionals with an interest in Parkinson's Disease

Natalie Muschamp

Founder of Step Up for Parkinson's

Amy Dimech

Physiotherapist

Roberta Said

Speech-Language Pathologist

Free for ASLP Members & SUFP Team Members

€2.00 for non-members

24th June 2020 18:00 - 19:00

Limited number of participants

Book your place on info@aslpmalta.org

#BeResponsible

Follow these 3 steps

Wear your mask



Wash your hands



Ensure physical distancing



Telepractice and its impact

As telepractice is becoming more popular with many of the Speech Language Pathologists, parents are also realising that they play an important role in their child's therapy progress. There is a current shift from the traditional way of how therapy is being carried out and about parental involvement. In this article Lauren Lowry, a Hanen certified Speech-Language Pathologist gives an overview on how this change is positively impacting the synergy between the therapist and the parents.

CLICK 



Aphasia Awareness Month



June is National Aphasia Awareness Month world-wide. During this month different associations around the world work to raise and spread awareness while educating the general public about aphasia — a language disorder most often caused by strokes. ASLP would like to join The National Aphasia Association (NAA) in spreading awareness and educate people on this not very popular but common language disorder. We invite you and your clients to follow this link and join in this cause.

CLICK 



Just to say Thank You

Today, we would like to show our gratitude to more of our colleagues Speech Language Pathologists who have been serving on the front line in one of the main hospitals, Rehabilitation Karin Grech Hospital. You are part of this hard-working team who daily takes care of the most vulnerable and that is very much appreciated. So here we are sending our thank you, and we mean it from the bottom of our heart!



COVID-19 – our experience at RHKG

Following a stressful period of anticipation, the first Covid-19 case was detected in Malta on 7th March. This brought Malta to a halt and a week later, all the services were struggling to deal with the uncertainty that such a threat posed to the usual ways of working. Professionals were suddenly faced by multiple amendments to work practices in a bid to maintain care delivery whilst simultaneously safeguarding the health of care providers and service users.

Inevitably, work practices at Karin Grech Hospital (KGH) were affected in a similar manner to other settings. KGH was the first hospital to close its doors to visitors, students, other

professionals or patients and relatives. In view of these changes, new SOPs had to be written for the benefit of staff and patients during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the situation was exacerbated by the inconsistency of information delivered to the professionals, such as directions that would change just a few hours after being issued. In a situation where professionals were already facing great uncertainty, this led to greater anxiety with most people being left guessing on how they should proceed.

By virtue of being a communication therapist, a hands-on approach is required. Patient assessments and reviews of those experiencing swallowing difficulties have to be carried out in close contact to the patient. Moreover, frequent visits to patients in



From left: Abigail Vassallo, Samantha Camilleri and Roberta Galea



From left: Emma Scerri, Francesca Vella and Gabrielle Ransley

different wards is inevitable. During the pandemic, such work duties became increasingly laborious due to the need to adhere to strict infection control practices whilst delivering care. This proved to be challenging and left us both mentally and physically drained.

We were acutely aware of the risk of compromising a whole team should one of us get infected. In view of this possibility, we split ourselves in two groups and started working on a rotating shift, with alternating weeks of being present at the hospital and doing telework at home. This meant that as a team, we had to upgrade our technology use so as to be able to have professional meetings and online sessions with our clients. Eventually, online service delivery meetings were enhanced through the use of specific platforms to carry out speech and language sessions when required. Thanks to this technology, some of our patients with speech and language difficulties are still receiving intensive therapy.

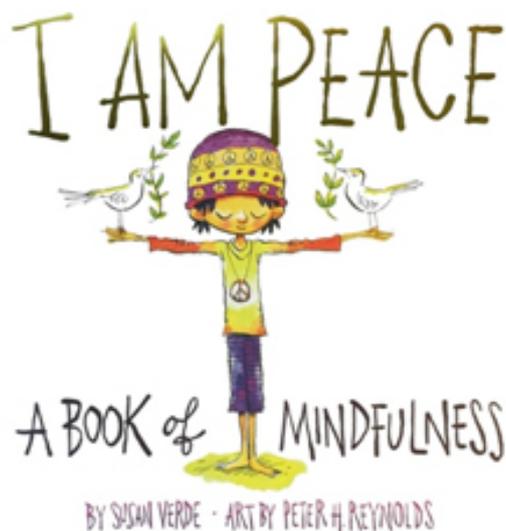
We also ensured that exposure to wards was limited to urgent cases such as when we received reports that a patient's general conditions and quality of life was deteriorating due to swallowing difficulties. In view of such exposure, in-house training on donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) was delivered to the team. Whilst the benefits of this training cannot be negated, it brought with it new anxieties such as whether we had followed the procedure correctly upon entering or exiting from a ward. This resulted in constant ruminations and stress.

Perhaps the most stressful factor of all was the need for some professionals to seek alternative accommodation so as to decrease risk of exposing loved ones. Those who had to maintain the same living arrangement were equally impacted since they

had to make drastic changes to their daily routine so as to attempt to avoid compromising the health of their significant others. Overall, this meant that one had to adapt to new living arrangements, experience solitude and isolation, with work being the only point of prolonged social contact. At the same time, it was clear that the work environment was a perilous place to be in due to a higher risk of exposure to the virus. We also opted to get swabbed, some even more than once, to ensure that we were not asymptomatic carriers of the virus. In view of the situation that has been described, this period has proven to be very difficult and challenging. These times have taught us to appreciate what we have. We are grateful that we work within our team as each and every one of us, despite the circumstances, personal fears and anxiety, kept giving her 100% (and more) throughout. We are all pulling one rope, in one direction.

At the time of writing, the directions provided continue to be characterised by inconsistency. This tends to be immensely frustrating since we are continuously in a state of senseless change - once you adapt to a situation, you are presented with yet another set of procedures that you need to abide to. It is understood that the inconsistencies are mostly brought about by the everchanging nature of the situation at large and not simply in healthcare or even in Malta. However, this often translates into interprofessional conflicts due to the barriers presented to effective communication. We just hope that whatever decisions are taken will not ruin what we achieved till now for the benefit of our clients and our communities!

***Roberta, Abigail, Samantha,
Gabrielle, Emma and Francesca***



I am Peace is a book which can be used with children to deal with anxiety using simple language, nice visuals and through a mindfulness way.

CLICK 



This is a very interesting video created by Sesame Street in Communities which can be used to target reasoning skills and also problem solving skills

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Sesame Street in Communities is also a website full of resources targeting different communication and life skills which are very colourful and attractive to use with children.