Every day we set new goals. A short to do list to help us through the day. Whether we complete it or not, it still gives us that sense of direction. In the midst of the hectic life we live in, the so many duties our job, our personal life impose on us, those voices in our head of what is good and what is not, we need to stop….we need to get focused.

Without that focus we can get lost. Yet, to achieve that focus, one needs to get lost and then find oneself again. To be born again from the ashes like a phoenix bird. Unfortunately, life can play tricks on us that can lead us to a standstill or to a stumbling stop....but one needs to ride on these experiences to start living again, to grab hold of one’s focus and aim to it until one reaches it! Words may be simpler than actions. Yes it may be very true.

Yet, words may be the seed of determination growing inside us. Water those words and transform them into actions. We know our destination, but the road to it is mysterious. Let the determination accompany you in your journey. Believe in yourself. Focus on what you are good at. Push yourself to try more and always aim high! Keep on trying as every day is a new day!

Let’s be Vivid .... Let’s take that chance and not the regret of missing it out!

“I'd rather regret the risks that didn't work out, than the chances I didn't take at all” - Simone Biles
Life is all about trying and failing and trying again. It is a roller coaster of experiences until one achieves that one dream. The road may be long and the finish line may seem far away but perseverance is one important medal to hold on tight to. This is the story of Delaney Schnell who besides being a Speech Language Pathologist student at the University of Arizona, she is a young determined athlete. Here is her inspiring story.

**Michael Phelps: From the kid that ‘wouldn’t amount to anything’ to the swimmer who broke Olympic records!**

“I look at myself every day and I’m so proud and so happy of who I am and who I’ve been able to become”.

Michael Phelps is considered the best swimmer of all time. However this was not always the perception that Phelps had of himself. Follow this link and read how Michael Phelps talks openly about his ADHD diagnosis when he was a kid and the long winding road to success.
Let’s meet…
Maja Theuma

Q. Describe yourself in 3 words
Determined, ambitious and a perfectionist

Q. How old were you when you started taking up swimming lessons?
I started swimming lessons at a very young age but started competitively at the age of 15, when I joined the ASA Paraswimming Team. After a 2 year gap, I joined Exiles in 2019 and started taking it more seriously.

Q. What inspired you to start taking up this sport?
I wanted a change in lifestyle and started showing interest in swimming after watching my brother train water polo. Coincidentally, whilst we were buying a water polo ball for my brother, my previous coach asked me to join her team and loved it ever since.

Q. What has been the biggest highlight in your swimming career so far?
Representing Malta in the London World Para Swimming Championships in 2019 and World Para Swimming European Championships in Madeira will surely be the biggest highlight in my swimming career. However, the Berlin World Series will forever be my favourite as it was my most successful meet, obtaining personal and national records.

Q. What challenges have you faced?
Failing is not an option that I consider and therefore the biggest challenge that I face is being too hard on myself. This unfortunately has led to overtraining, injuries and thus poor performance.

Q. What are your goals for your swimming career? OR What do you aspire to achieve?
Like every other athlete’s dream, my dream is to take part in the Paralympic Games.

Q. Any other hobbies (besides swimming)?
Besides swimming and training, I like to experience and explore new things and new places.

Q. Any words of encouragement for aspiring athletes out there?
As Simone Biles said “put mental health first, because if you don’t, then you’re not going to enjoy your sport and you’re not going to succeed as much as you want to. So, it’s okay sometimes to sit out the big competitions to focus on yourself because it shows how strong of a competitor and person that you really are, rather than just the battle through it.”
Let’s be Vivid approached VERONICA MONTANARO a Speech Language Pathologist working solely in the private sector. It was a step in the dark but surely a continuous positive experience. Veronica, narrates her journey and how each day is a learning experience.

Veronica Montanaro is an established Speech and Language Pathologist. She has been working in the field for over 16 years. Veronica, forms part an independent Multidisciplinary Team (TAASC) and is also a founding Partner at Move-The Sports and Exercise Medicine Centre. Veronica is a visiting assistant lecturer at the University of Malta & has started her PhD journey with the Centre of Disability Studies at the University of Leeds. Veronica is certified to deliver training in the Hanen:It Takes Two to Talk & a has run several certified Elklan courses for parents.

I shifted to full-time private practice in 2016. What initially drew me to private practice was the ability to control my working hours, the nature of my caseload, and the level of service provision. It is not without apprehension that one approaches this kind of liberty, but once I’d taken the plunge, I almost immediately started to enjoy these benefits and more.
I first joined TAASC as an SLP and service coordinator and joined as a partner in 2021. TAASC is an independent Multidisciplinary Service in Malta that has been providing quality evidence-based assessment & interventions for children, adolescents & adults with mental health difficulties & neurodevelopmental disorders for over six years. I have witnessed the growth of the team to a total of 50 professionals across different disciplines, including 7 SLPs.

Over the years, we have accumulated some fantastic resources, and having a well-equipped resource room makes working with our caseload a lot easier. As we worked to improve and evolve our service delivery within SLT, we began various group interventions that included the popular Social Language Groups, Dance and Movement Therapy, Articulation Groups and Story-Telling groups. An avenue that interested me was the provision of parent training through workshops and the range of Elklan courses. These are accredited courses and suitable for parents, SLPs and anyone who works with children.

What I like about TAASC is that it acts in a way that encourages every member of the team to be the best version of themselves they can be. This goes beyond a supportive role where the personal and professional growth of the team is concerned, but also it encourages and helps resource growth. Our peer supervision talks, monthly MDTs and, of course, our little corridor chats are what I look forward to every day.

Working within a MDT setup means that we get to discuss, join sessions and also assess individuals with other professionals. Our holistic view goes further. At TAASC we look at the family as a unit that is inextricably linked from the child as a client. I might be following the child, but a colleague may be following the parents. This is what makes us unique.

I value that the therapeutic journey is a process and that we have the services available to us within the same premises. For instance, a child may start Speech and Language Therapy sessions with me, then shift towards one of the groups for some sessions. Following that, we may refer the child to play therapy, parent training, or one of the team's psychologists. This way, we feel that it is child-centric and familiarises themselves with other clinicians within the team.

We faced some challenges at the start of the pandemic. We needed to shift everyone online quickly and efficiently. Families were initially hesitant to join online since, at the beginning, we all felt that this would be just a short phase. I still made myself available to families who wished to resume Face-to-Face sessions. I always felt a strong duty of care, and this is the time that families needed us the most.

Although still anecdotal, I've had a number of cases recently present their young child to the clinic with a language delay. Upon further analysis, we realise that families have had to cope with supporting their children with online learning and then heading straight into work once school ends. This left them with little choice but to induce passivity in their young children, who didn't require homeschooling.

Children who would otherwise have had additional language stimulation by being taken to the grocer, playground or grandparents were not exposed to any of this. Shopping was mainly online, playgrounds were closed, and unvaccinated grandparents were staying away. This is a new reality that we are facing. I also feel strongly about the family's well-being. These are not easy times for anyone, and the best that we can do is support the families.

Going forward, I intend to take this valuable experience with me and continue to focus on a more sociological approach to therapy, viewing clients as integral to their family unit and utilising the full extent of the TAASC multidisciplinary approach to deliver the most effective and complete spectrum of services.
Different resources that can help target different topics such as determination, different abilities and aiming high for kids and adolescents.

**Olympic themed therapy session ideas**

This is also great as a reinforcer

This video can also be used to target higher order language skills, syntax and morphology and storytelling skills

**INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE**

"You are not disabled by the disabilities you have, you are able by the abilities you have" - Oscar Pistorius