



From the Editor

In just a few days our Annual End Of Financial Year Appeal EOFY closes. If you can please [donate now](#) and help us deliver a series of educational workshops. Read more inside.

Blue Knot Day 29 October, is just 4 months away and you might want to start planning an event in your community or workplace. Read about the support we can provide for your fundraising or awareness raising event. My Story this month features a poem by John that discusses how he has come to understand that “Nobody can set me free, Freedom is entirely up to me.”

In this issue we include information on the recently announced National Apology on behalf of the Australian government to the survivors, victims and families of institutional child sexual abuse to be held on 22 October. You may like to share your views and contribute to the community consultation process.

The National Redress Scheme is a response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It commences on 1 July and you can read an outline in this issue.

In the ‘Self Care Resources’ section we introduce a website that can help support you if you are a parent who experienced trauma in childhood.

And our feature article this month provides you with 14 ideas that might help you feel and be calmer.

As always if you have comments about what you have read in this issue, contributions for the My Story section or suggestions for future issues, please contact me at newsletter@blueknot.org.au

Warm regards

Jane Macnaught

Ways That Might Help You Feel And Be Calmer

When you have experienced trauma, especially trauma from childhood, you can find yourself triggered into feeling overwhelmed and into innate fight, flight and freeze responses.

When a person is overwhelmed they can become either hyper-aroused, (agitated, shaking, sweating or raise their voice) or hypo-aroused, which is experienced as emotional numbing, zoning out or “shut down”. Both are trauma responses and people with trauma histories can move between being hyper-aroused and hypo-aroused. The following tips may help support you if you become agitated, anxious or are feeling overwhelmed. Not all of them will suit everyone; some may not be helpful.

Therese Borchard, describes herself as a highly sensitive person: “I'm easily overwhelmed or over-aroused. As such, I am always looking for ways to calm down. Here are some tips and tricks I've learned to take the edge off.” Many survivors are easily overwhelmed too. That's why some of these tips might be useful.

Borchard has compiled these techniques referring to the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program Lauren Brukner's book “The Kids' Guide to Staying Awesome and in Control” (but they work for adults, too) and Elaine Aron's book “The Highly Sensitive Person”.



1. Using your thumb to massage your palm can be soothing

What's great about this activity is that you can do it quietly sitting at your desk or in a café with other people. No-one will notice. Simply use the thumb of one hand and press around the palm of the other hand. Doing this can be very soothing for some.

2. Pushing your palms together can help reduce stress

By pushing your palms together and holding for 5 to 10 seconds, you give your body "proprioceptive input," according to Brukner, which "lets your body know where it is in space." While this can be helpful if you are stressed, sometimes if you are emotionally numb and zoned out it can be hard to get in touch with your body. You might need to use movement or other techniques to become aware of your surroundings and to ground yourself in them.

3. Closing your eyes can provide a much-needed break

80 percent of sensory stimulation comes in through the eyes, so shutting them every now and then gives your brain a much-needed break. Some people who are stressed or sensitive can feel calmer if they can stay in

bed with their eyes closed. You don't have to be sleeping. Just lying in bed with eyes closed allows for some chill time.

4. Sighing can help you be present

Breathe in to a count of five through your mouth, and then let out a very loud sigh. Small sighs can help to adjust your energy level and focus. Just to note that many survivors can struggle to be fully present in the moment, so this might be difficult or not helpful for you at this time.

5. Doing this monkey stretch can help release tension

In this exercise, you bring your hands (arms extended) in front of you, then bring your arms down. Then you bring your arms (still extended) to your side, and then down. Finally you bring your arms all the way past your head and then swoop down, with your head dangling between your knees, and you hang out there for a second. This exercise can help release the tension we hold in different parts of our body.

6. Giving yourself a quick hug can help lift mood for some people

Did you know that a 10-second hug a day can help change biochemical and physiological forces in your body and for some people, can lower the risk of heart disease, combat stress, fight fatigue, boost your immune system, and ease depression? You can begin by giving yourself a hug. By squeezing your belly and back at the same time, you are again giving yourself proprioceptive input (letting your body know where you are in space), says Brukner, which can help stabilize you. Sometimes if you are zoned out it can be hard to get in touch with your body like this. You might need to use movement or other techniques to become aware of your surroundings and to ground yourself in them.

7. Pushing up against a wall can help calm some people

If pushing up against the wall with flat palms and feet planted on the floor for 5 to 10 seconds can be very calming — placing the weight of our body against a solid, immobile surface and feeling the pull of gravity can be stabilizing, even on a subconscious level.



8. Some people find taking a superman pose calming and strengthening. You lie on your belly on the floor and extend your arms in front of you. At the same time, you extend your legs behind you and hold them straight out. Hold that pose for 10 seconds. This may help if you are feeling foggy, overexcited, distracted, or antsy.

9. Trying to shake it off can help reduce fear for some

Did you know that animals relieve their stress by shaking? Lots of animals like antelopes shake off their fear after being frozen in panic to escape a predator. You might try a shaking action to see if it helps.

10. Inhale deeply for a relaxing bubble breath

A bubble breath is simple and can be calming. Here's how to do it: Breathe in for five seconds, out for five seconds.

Imagine you have a wand with a bubble on it. When you breathe out, be careful not to pop the bubble.

Place one flat palm on your heart, one flat palm on your belly.

Breathe in through your nose and hold your breath for five seconds.

Breathe out a large "bubble" through pursed lips, blow out for five seconds. Again, this can help some people but is not for everyone.

11. Use a few drops of lavender essential oil

There are different theories as how and why lavender oil can help to calm some people down. Some scientists believe that lavender stimulates the activity of brain cells in the amygdala (fear center) in a similar way to some sedatives. Others think molecules from essential oils interact in the blood with enzymes and hormones. Research backs its soothing results. A study published in the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine measured the responses of 17 cancer hospice patients to humidified essential lavender oil aromatherapy. Results reflected a positive change in blood pressure and pulse, pain, anxiety, depression, and sense of well-being. Lavender oil is also used by some people to help them sleep.

12. Use Water

“Water helps in many ways,” writes Aron. “When over aroused, keep drinking it — a big glass once an hour. Walk beside some water, look at it, and listen to it. Get into water if you can, for a bath, shower or a swim. Hot tubs and hot springs are popular for good reasons.”

13. Music can help heal the body, mind, and soul

From the earliest days of civilization, music has been used to heal the body and soul, and to express what is difficult to articulate in words. Victor Hugo once said, “Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.” Therapists have tapped into the healing power of creative lyrics and the composition of notes to design music therapy programs for people struggling with depression.

14. Try the four-square breathing exercise for anxiety

A final breathing exercise to try is the “Four Square,” which many use to help reduce anxiety:

Breathe in slowly to a count of four.

Hold the breath for a count of four.

Exhale slowly through pursed lips to a count of four.

Rest for a count of four (without taking any breaths).

Take two normal breaths.

Start over again with number one.

If you have some tips on how you calm down that you would like to share with our readers please write to newsletter@blueknot.org.au

This is an abridged version of the article that was originally published here:

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/columns/therese-borchard-sanity-break/10-quick-ways-to-calm-down/>

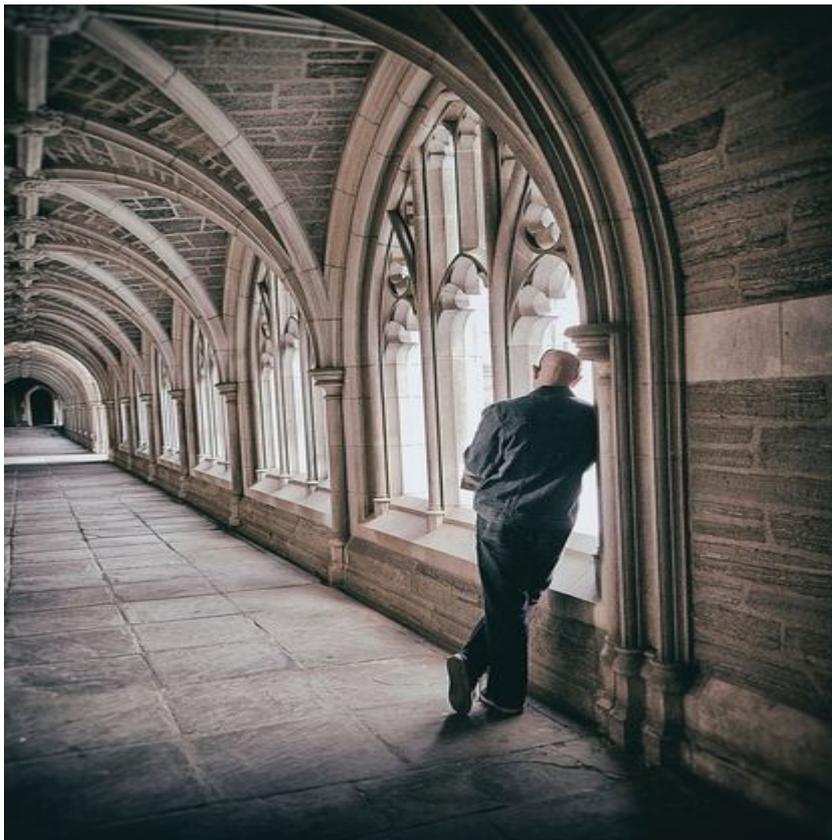
References

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program

Lauren Brukner's book "The Kids' Guide to Staying Awesome and in Control" (but they work for adults, too)

Elaine Aron's book "The Highly Sensitive Person".

The National Redress Scheme – An Outline



The National Redress Scheme is a response to recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Redress is about institutions being held accountable for the sexual abuse of children by acknowledging the harm caused and offering

support to people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The National Redress Scheme will provide support to people who were sexually abused as children while in the care of an institution, provided that institution/s has opted into the scheme. The Scheme will start on 1 July 2018, and will run for 10 years.

In addition to the Commonwealth Government, all State Governments have committed to join the Scheme. Many of the major non-government institutions have also committed to join the Scheme: Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Salvation Army, YMCA, Scouts Australia and the Uniting Church have all announced that they will join the Scheme and provide redress to people sexually abused as children in their care.

Some institutions in which children were sexually abused have not opted into the scheme as yet. To ensure that you get the latest news and to subscribe to receive updates go to the [National Redress Scheme website](#).

By joining up, each state or territory government or non-government institution is committing to pay for redress for people who were abused in its care.

The Redress Scheme can provide three things:

- access to counselling and psychological care
- a direct personal response – such as an apology from the responsible institution for people who want it
- a monetary payment with payments to be determined according to the information provided. Payments will vary from less than \$10,000 to a maximum of \$150,000.

The National Redress Scheme is an alternative to getting compensation through the courts – you can do one or the other, but not both.

Access to the Redress Scheme depends on: the type of abuse a person experienced, where and when it happened, and a person's life now. The type of abuse covered by the Redress scheme – must include sexual abuse, and may also include other types of abuse. An institution must be responsible for the abuse; non-institutional abuse is not covered.

Abuse must have occurred when the person was aged under 18, must have happened before 1 July, 2018 when the scheme starts. The institution or organisation responsible for the abuse must have joined the National Redress Scheme. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

A range of support services will be available to support people through the process of redress. In addition access will be provided to legal and

financial support services to help people understand their options, through the process.

While the scheme will commence on 1 July 2018 some states will not be able to start processing applications until legislation is passed. However people will be able to start their application process in preparation for the passing of the legislation. If you are thinking about applying to the scheme and want to find out more you can call the information line or contact any of the support services that will be listed on the website after 1 July 2018.

For more information please call the National Redress Information Line – 1800 146 713

<https://www.dss.gov.au/national-redress-scheme-for-people-who-have-experienced-institutional-child-sexual-abuse>

<https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/programs-services/children/redress-scheme-for-people-who-have-experienced-institutional-child-sexual-abuse/national-redress-scheme-frequently-asked-questions>

National Apology Announced 22 October 2018



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has pledged to deliver a formal national apology on behalf of the Australian government to the survivors, victims and families of institutional child sexual abuse on 22 October to coincide with national children's week.

The apology will form part of the government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. So far the federal government has accepted 104 of the 122 recommendations made by the royal commission. The remaining 18 recommendations from the royal commission are still under consideration. Each state and territory government will provide their own response.

Blue Knot Foundation president Dr Cathy Kezelman said the apology is "very significant and much welcomed. For some people, (the apology) is going to be very significant. The government of this country has heard what has happened to them, has believed them, and has now said, sorry, this never should have happened in institutions. For others, it will be part of their journey," Dr Kezelman said.

The government has set up the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Reference Group. The Group brings together a broad range of survivors and their representatives from across Australia. It will facilitate the delivery of a National Apology to victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse by advising the Government on the form and content of the apology.

The Reference Group will also comprises four Members of Parliament and six representatives from key survivor support and advocacy groups, as well as Indigenous support services, survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and family members of survivors. Some of this group were also involved in the Government's apology to the Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants in 2009.

The Attorney General, Hon Christian Porter MP released a statement including that:

"As a nation, we must mark this occasion in a form that reflects the wishes of victims and survivors and affords them the dignity to which they were entitled as children, but which was denied to them by the very people who were tasked with their care.

To ensure the voice of victims and survivors is heard, the Reference Group will undertake consultations with key stakeholders, victims and survivors across all states and territories."

All survivors and interested persons are encouraged to share their views about the National Apology during the consultation process via the dedicated National Apology website

– www.nationalapologyconsultation.gov.au. Submissions must be received by 31 July 2018. You can fill in the online form or send a written submission to:

National Apology Secretariat
Attorney-General's Department
3-5 National Circuit
BARTON ACT 2600

Freedom



What does freedom mean to me?
It's a state of mind that's shackle free
A world without the pain of fear
A life worthwhile; shed a tear.

Freedom, will I ever touch?

Guilt and shame hurts so much

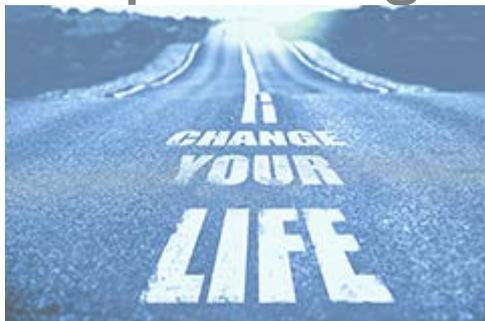
Sadness clouds never cease
Will I ever find real peace?

Does freedom mean a happy life?
Free from the child I sacrificed
I cannot say I know for sure
All I know is what I had to endure.

I look around at the people I see
How many of you are just like me
How many hunger for liberty
Who among you can set me free?

Now I see what I have to find
Freedom is a state of mind
Nobody can set me free
Freedom is entirely up to me.

Help Change Lives



With your support, **Blue Knot Foundation** aims to raise **\$50,000 by June 30** to deliver a series of educational workshops for adult survivors of childhood trauma and their support networks across Australia.

For the past 3 years, we have raised funds through the End Of Financial Year (EOFY) annual appeal to deliver educational workshops throughout the country. Workshops that have changed lives. As one participant told us last year, *“I have learnt things today that will be life changing for me and my family”*.

But we need your support. Please help us reach our fundraising target of **\$50,000**, to enable us to host a survivor workshop in every state and territory in Australia and deliver workshops for family, friends and loved ones.

Your donation will help provide:

- \$5 - handouts for participants to use on the day
- \$25 - a trauma-informed resource pack to take home
- \$50 - a nutritious meal and snacks
- \$100 - a safe venue
- \$250 - educational place for 1 workshop participant
- \$6,000 - sponsor an entire workshop and provide education and support for up to 30 workshop participants

Head to the [Blue Knot Foundation website](#) or the [Blue Knot Foundation EOFY Fundraising page](#) to make a donation, and help change lives today!

Where To Start? How about Now?



If you have ever wanted to get involved in Blue Knot Day but never knew where to start, then NOW is the time to let us know!

With just 4 months left to go until Blue Knot Day on Monday 29 October, now is the time to start planning your Blue Knot event. Blue Knot Foundation offers advice and support on managing Blue Knot Day awareness and fundraising events, such as community BBQs or

morning teas. We also support volunteers in developing their own Blue Knot Day (or Blue Knot evening!) ideas.

“Blue Knot Day is such a critically important time, where we get a window to communicate to broad audiences which otherwise we wouldn’t normally be able to reach, if it were not for the support of Blue Knot Day volunteers”, said Cath James, Blue Knot Foundation Fundraising Manager.

“As an organisation we cannot raise funds or awareness when we work in isolation. Blue Knot Day has only grown and strengthened over the years thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time to run events in their own communities. This year, we need to keep these conversations growing and we need support from right across the country to let survivors know that they are not alone, and that recovery IS possible.”

Blue Knot Day 2018

Blue Knot Day is Blue Knot Foundation’s annual awareness and fundraising day, with a week of events and activities planned throughout Blue Knot Week, Monday 29 October – Sunday 4 November 2018.

We Support You

All Blue Knot Day community events are fully supported by Blue Knot Foundation, with information packs, flyers, fundraising guidelines, advertising and other supports.

If you have an idea you would like to explore, or find out more about Blue Knot Day, please contact Fundraising Manager, Cath James on cjames@blueknot.org.au or 0466 788 371.

To register your Blue Knot Day event please visit <https://www.blueknot.org.au/BlueKnotDay> for further information.

SELF CARE RESOURCE

In this section, we will review self care/help resources our Blue Knot Helpline counselling team collects to share with people who call the

Helpline. We are delighted to share these ideas with our Breaking Free readers. What is helpful for one person may not be right for someone else so please experiment, explore and find what suits you.



Parenting Support



Parenting can be challenging for any parent. If you experienced trauma in your childhood and are a parent, there is help and support available.

<https://www.acesconnection.com/g/Parenting-with-ACEs>

This month we introduce you to a website in the USA that many have found to be really helpful. It is a part of the ACEs ** Connection website. What does it mean to be an ACEs-, trauma-informed, and resilience-building parent/caregiver? And to be a parent with ACEs? What do parent education, training, and support services look like through this lens and how can they reach the largest number of parents/caregivers? This site offers a community which you can join, if you choose. This website provides thoughts on parenting with ACEs, trauma sensitive support, stories, tools, and community. There are lots of articles on a range of topics which you might find helpful.

We know that with good support people can and do recover. We also know that when parents who have experienced childhood trauma have worked through their trauma, their children do better. This website can help support you if you are a parent who experienced trauma in childhood.

** ACEs Adverse Childhood Experiences Study which was a groundbreaking USA public health study, identified some of the impacts of experiencing trauma in childhood, or adverse childhood experiences.

IN THE NEWS

1. ROBUST MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP ESSENTIAL TO STOP INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

It's now been six months since the Royal Commission handed down its landmark report into child sexual abuse in Australia. More than 400 recommendations were made, aimed at stopping abuse and improving the way paedophiles are investigated and prosecuted. [Read more](#)

2. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: ALL STATES ON BOARD FOR REDRESS AFTER WA RESOLVES DOUBTS

Western Australia, the only remaining state not to sign up to the national redress scheme for child sexual abuse survivors, has resolved its concerns with the federal government, and its attorney general will now put the scheme to cabinet. [Read More](#)

3. LIFE FOR CHILD SEX CRIMES

Attorney General Mark Speakman announced the package on Wednesday morning following a series of recommendations by the recent *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse*. [Read More](#)

