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VALID e-newsletter issue #31

30/04/20

Dear VALID Supporter

Isolated? Not when we still have each other! Despite the current crisis, people with a disability are finding ways to remain connected, active and optimistic, and the VALID Team is still working hard... even though everyone is working from home.

Here are some of the things we're doing:

VALID Self Advocacy Network Meeting

We had our first online Self-Advocacy Network meeting over Zoom, and had 42 people present, mostly self-advocates from our 4 Melbourne Metro networks (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western) with a few new members, who it was great to meet!

The feedback we received from this meeting was really positive, and our members were happy to catch up with each other and also meet new people from the other networks. It was great to hear how everyone is keeping themselves active at home, including different activities, learning new things, exercising, and doing projects. It was also great to hear that some people are continuing to do things with their services, like Burke and Beyond which is running all its programs online including hospitality and horticulture.

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If you want to know more about VALID Self Advocacy Network Meetings during the current crisis check out this video.

Self Advocacy Networks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) update

If you want more information call 03) 9416 4003 or email Anthony – Anthony@valid.org.au or Sara – Sara.de@valid.org.au

VALID Self Advocacy Forum

The VALID Self Advocacy Forum recently met on-line for the first time and gave a strong reminder of the value of this important forum in the lives of many people. A key item on the agenda was a discussion about ways of getting people living in group homes connected. We talked about the great initiative of the NDIS in allowing certain participants to use their plans to purchase devices to get on-line, but we also talked about the fact that many people don't know they have this right, and they don't have people in their lives who can help them get connected on-line. The meeting praised the work of some very good services that are doing everything they can to make it happen for their residents – for example Life Without Barriers is working to make Wi-Fi available to all residents - and called on all services to follow their lead.

us know by calling 03) 9416 4003 or emailing Anthony – Anthony@valid.org.au or Sara – Sara.de@valid.org.au



Aruma Customer Focus Group Meeting

Last week we had our first ever Aruma Customer Focus Group Meeting. The meeting was held online with people from a range of group homes in Shepparton, which shows that there is no barrier to connecting with people when we have the right equipment and support available! It was fantastic to be able to meet these men and women, talk about the importance of the Aruma Shepparton Focus group and their role in it (to give feedback and share ideas with their Management and represent others in the service among other things) and have their input into the issues affecting them.

We also had a discussion about the Coronavirus (Covid-19). All the members were very informed about the Coronavirus, what the symptoms are, and what they can do themselves and what the Government is saying to do so they can stay safe. It was wonderful to see that people with a disability in group homes are receiving ongoing information about the Coronavirus in a way they can understand.

We're looking forward to starting online Aruma Customer Focus Group meetings in Mildura and Melbourne Inner North in the next few weeks.

We're also working with Life Without Barriers to get our existing Focus Group and Speak Up For Yourself (SUFY) meetings online.

within your service please contact Rick on 03) 9416 4003 or email him at rick@valid.org.au

Palliative Care Project

Announcement from Palliative Care Victoria:

Palliative Care Victoria and VALID are delighted to release our first poster "It's okay to talk about grief".

The poster is in Easy English and is designed for people with intellectual disability, to encourage them to talk about grief and know where there's support to do so.

This poster is the first in a series of information that is being developed about palliative care, death and dying, grief and loss for people living with intellectual disability. The planned posters and booklets will give people with intellectual disability, their carers and disability service staff access to suitable information to understand palliative care and to encourage discussions about death, dying, grief and loss.

Palliative Care Victoria would like to thank VALID, especially their working group of self-advocates, for their collaboration, expertise and enthusiasm for this project. We also would like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Health and Human Services for funding this project.

Please share this email with the poster "It's okay to talk about grief" with your clients, families, staff, service providers and networks.

We hope you find the resource helpful and would value any feedback you have.

[Download the poster here](#)

Easy English Resources

We've also been creating some Easy English resources with information about the Coronavirus, and are working on converting documents to Easy English for some organisations to make their information more accessible for people with disability.

If you are interested in talking to us about Easy English documents please

You can find our COVID-19 Easy and Plain English Resources [here](#).

Media Release - Who can request an NDIS plan review?

The NDIA recently answered an important question about who can ask for a review for an NDIS participant. They said that independent advocates, support coordinators, providers or any other person who supports you can contact the NDIA to explain any changes you need in your plan.

This is important because VALID advocates for a lot of people with intellectual disability who do not have family or anyone else to help with decision-making, and need someone else to ask for a review on their behalf. Sometimes people need full assistance with simple NDIS decisions but do not have a Plan Nominee because they have no-one to nominate, and they do not have a guardian because there are no major legal decisions to be made.

The Independent Advisory Committee to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) answered the question asked by Ms Belinda Epstein-Frisch, on behalf of the Council's Intellectual Disability Reference Group. Ms Epstein-Frisch used a case study from VALID to emphasise the importance of allowing people to assist participants with plan reviews.

You can find the full report [here](#).

10 steps to excellent NDIS therapy reports - Easy Read videos

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10 steps to excellent NDIS therapy reports

VALID has adapted the 10 steps to excellent NDIS therapy reports guide into 10 Easy Read videos. This resource was initially developed by VALID advocates with expertise in providing advocacy support to people with intellectual disabilities. The Easy Read videos were developed by the VALID Inclusion Point team.

In addition to helping allied health professionals, it can also be used as an information source for NDIS participants, families, Local Area Coordinators, and Support Coordinators when they are commissioning therapy reports, or to determine whether a report is of a high standard.

You can find the videos [here](#)

We're really excited about connecting with people with our Easy Read video resources. Keep an eye out for more to come!

Dulcie Stone Writers Competition 2020



The closing date for entries to the Dulcie Stone Writers Competition has been extended to Friday 24th July 2020.

For those of you who haven't submitted an entry for the Dulcie Stone Writers Competition yet, this will give you a chance to prepare a terrific piece of writing for the judges to have a look at. For those who have submitted work, if you would like to refine your entry and resubmit please feel free to do just that.

With us being restricted to our homes at the moment, due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), we will have plenty of time for writing. So, we are exploring some ideas for other online writing opportunities with Writers Victoria during this period which we will let you know about soon.

The theme for the 2020 Competition is A Good Life – Are we there yet? Details about the Competition and an Entry Form are available on the VALID website.

You can find out more [here](#).

Stories from Home - Weekly writing in May 2020



During the month of May, VALID in partnership with Writers Victoria Write-ability Program, will be posting a weekly prompt on our website and social media for you to write 50 words or less. The themes are Home, Isolation, Friends, and the Future.

With so many of us isolated at home, this is a chance for us to reflect on your experiences and share them with others through our writing. At the end of each week, email your 50 word story to heather@valid.org.au or send your story to us by Facebook Messenger through [VALID Facebook page](#).

Make sure you include your contact details (e.g. phone number) in your response and the theme (e.g. Home for Week 1) as a heading at the top of your story.

You can find out more [here](#).

Connecting to each other using technology - a survey by VALID



We want to hear from people with disability in the community who are connected to VALID or would like to be connected to VALID.

We understand this is a difficult time for everyone in the community, but that it is especially difficult for people with disability and their families. We care about how Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the government lockdowns are affecting the lives of people with disability and we want to make sure that everyone is still connected to their communities. We at VALID are continuing our work in individual advocacy, systemic advocacy, community development projects and training, and are looking for new ways to connect with you. To help us continue our work, we would like to know about how you connect to technology in your home.

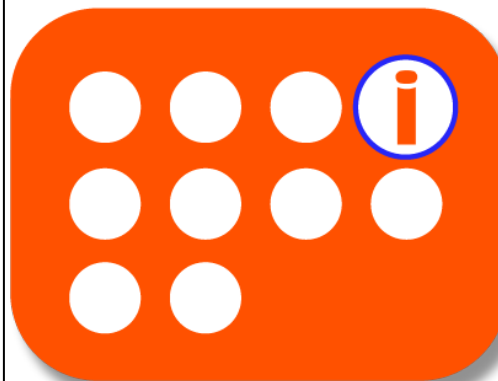
You can access the survey [here](#).

Your responses are important to us and will be kept confidential.

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Families as Planning Partners Online Course

[Multiple dates and times](#)



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