

Men's Health

PEER EDUCATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS
promoting healthy lifestyles for Australia's veterans



MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN ISSUE



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PROMOTING A HEALTHY AUSTRALIA

Did you know that the Australian Government has established the Australian National Preventive Health Agency to help improve health outcomes for all Australians? The Agency is responsible for *making change happen* on a National level and supports the development and implementation of preventive health initiatives targeting obesity, harmful alcohol consumption and tobacco.

Major projects and campaigns currently being undertaken by the Agency include:

- The National Tobacco Campaign www.quitnow.gov.au
- *Shape up Australia* obesity prevention initiative www.shapeup.gov.au
- The National Binge Drinking Strategy www.tacklingbingedrinking.gov.au

For more information visit: www.anpha.gov.au

promoting
a healthy
australia

ANPHA

Australian National
Preventive Health Agency

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Prior preparation and planning events...

As with any effective military operation, prior preparation and planning for separation from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will give the best chance of coping with challenges that may arise during this transitional period.



A Chat with Penny

My inner voice seems to tell me that many of us are born hard wired to procrastinate, to be unresponsive, dislike change, postpone important decisions and are just plain physically and intellectually lazy. Penny says that is me to a tee.



The bloke's guide to swapping

What happens when you put on a shirt or jeans which fitted you like a glove last year but now the buttons on your shirt are busting and you can't do up your trousers?

Hey! It's simple. You buy a bigger shirt and trousers and the problem is solved. No it ain't.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: Don't suffer in silence – online videos address the mental health impact on veterans and their families, Book review on Willpower, Readiness to Change, Veteran and Community Grants – Bringing about Community Change and much, much more.

VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK



Veterans' Health Week 2013

If you read the November edition of the MHPE magazine you may have noted the article on the success of Veterans' Health Week (VHW) in 2012. The time has come to start considering VHW 2013. This year's week will be from Monday 14 to Sunday 20 October 2013.

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editorial



Naomi Mulcahy

Welcome to the Making Change Happen issue

Sometimes I feel that we're being bombarded with information telling us what we should do to make our lives better. From the food we should eat, the exercise we should do, and the relationships we should have – if we do all the “right things” we'll live a longer and more fulfilling life. Open any Sunday paper and there will be some lifestyle insert with the predictable articles on “what we should be doing”. If we all ate within the recommended daily intake, exercised 30 mins a day, didn't smoke, had two alcohol free days a week, and never felt sad, lonely or frustrated with life, it would be great for our health and the national budget, but somehow it wouldn't be quite real.

If we all know what we should be doing, why aren't we doing it? One of the reasons is because it involves change. When life is comfortable



letters to the editor

What we're looking for ...

Letters should be no more than 100 words and relate to articles or topics discussed in the magazine or regarding men's health generally

Please send your letters to The Editor

menshealth@dva.gov.au, or
c/ – Department of Veterans' Affairs
Men's Health Peer Education magazine
GPO Box 9998
Sydney NSW 2001

Naomi Mulcahy
National Coordinator Men's Health Peer Education

and has an easy routine, it can be hard to incorporate change. Even when we know that the change would make life better, we often procrastinate and become very good at reasoning why we shouldn't do anything differently. There is an enormous amount of literature available on the topic of change. Go online and google the words "making personal change happen" or visit your local bookstore and head for the personal development section, and you'll find a wide range of information on the subject.

We can make change happen but it can also be forced upon us. Most would agree that it's better to be the one controlling the change rather than the other way around. When we were planning this issue, we decided that we wanted the focus to be on articles which would provide information and inspiration on making change happen. The scope includes health, relationships, work and community.

Even if we make only small changes to our lives, if we can see an improvement, and we're realistic about what we can achieve, I think it means we're heading in the right direction. We also want to flag with our readers, how important it is to support someone when they're making changes to their life. Encouraging a friend or family member and providing a supportive environment, can go a long way in helping them make change happen.

We wish you success for the changes you have planned for 2013.



THE EDITOR

'A Chat With Penny' demands a feline response. I am 'Pushkin', most beautiful of cats, and named after a great Russian writer, 'Penny' being an obsolete low denomination coin.

Penny suggested an oh-so-amusing meaning of CATS, as 'Cute And Totally Self-centred'. Well, DOG means 'Doo-doo On Ground', the universal sign of their presence. And cat-chasing is just more Freudian obsession with rear ends. From a lifetime teaching rudiments of health such as washing, careful eating, exercise, relaxation and mental bliss, this mellow, still beautiful older cat could offer your readers some real expertise.

pushkin
Most Beautiful of Cats

MHPE MAGAZINE AND REPRODUCTION OF CONTENT

Just a reminder to our readers, if you would like to include an article that's appeared in an edition of the magazine in your own publication, please contact the Editor to confirm if there are any restrictions on the re-publication of the material.

MHPE Magazine Editorial Committee MEMBERSHIP

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Chris Clarke DVA
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John Hall DVA (outgoing member)

The Committee would like to thank **Simon** and **John** for their support of the MHPE Magazine.

KEEPING YOUR RESOLUTION



How many times have you made a New Year's Resolution? And how many years did you find you were able to follow through? Sometimes despite best intentions, we set ourselves goals that are difficult to reach because we don't know where to find appropriate support or resources to make it happen.

The University of Sydney (2010) found that approximately 50% of Australians will make a New Year's Resolution each year. The most popular resolutions made don't tend to change from year to year. The top five are:

1. "I will lose weight/get fit"
2. "I will quit smoking/drinking"
3. "I will save money/make more money/get out of debt"
4. "I will spend more time with family/friends"
5. "I will get organised"

University of Sydney's coaching psychology unit head Dr Anthony Grant found that it took a considerable amount of time before changes were noticeable. Dr Grant's research found that it took an average of 66 days to form a new habit with some unlucky people taking as long as 254 days to alter their ways. Most people would revert to their old habits

THE OUTLOOK:

Let's consider that you've joined the 50% who made a resolution to make a change in your life this year. Where to from here?

Perhaps it is our outlook that will determine our level of success. There

TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE

Three of our Men's Health Peer Education Volunteers have agreed to do the Shape Up Australia 12 Week Planner, and report back to us in the July issue about their successes and the challenges they found along the way. Refer to pages 22–23 to read their profiles.

is a train of thought that suggests if we focus on breaking a habit, losing weight, giving up smoking, there is a negative emphasis and we can feel that we will be missing out if we keep our resolution.

Starting from a positive point of view may influence our attitude and success. Try creating a new habit, gaining energy from fresh air, playing with your children or grandchildren. That way you are not losing anything, but rather focusing on the benefits of not having that habit control you.

A TRUE STORY:

"I was struggling with giving up smoking. My sister-in-law was visiting and we went for our usual nightly walk around the block. She was a smoker and 5 years older than me, but to look at her you would think she was healthy. She sat down at the first chair and encouraged us to continue on without her. She was breathless, sweating, pale and visibly shaking from the exertion.

At this point my resolve not to smoke again was reinforced. I imagined my life in five years' time, with my ability to walk being reduced to the extent of 100 metres. There would be many places, things and people that I would never be able to see. I still don't smoke. I recognise this is just my story, but not everyone can find the switch in their head to turn off the need to smoke – I just hope that they will and it won't be too late."

RB

CHALLENGE YOURSELF:

The research indicates that the odds are in your favour if you make that first step and resolve to change. Setting yourself achievable goals, no matter how small, can improve your general health and wellbeing. There are many well researched and highly organised "Health Challenges" out there that you can access without breaking your bank balance.

Some programs will help you to get yourself mentally prepared for the task ahead, while others give you very practical, step-by-step help to achieve health improvement objectives. For example, the Australian National Preventive Health Agency's *Shape Up Australia* obesity prevention initiative encourages you to set and maintain achievable changes in your every day life that will improve your health.

The *Shape Up Australia* 12-Week Planner might be right for you. Week by week, follow the simple suggestions and create some new habits to reduce the risk of chronic disease and kick start a healthier, more enjoyable life. The Planner includes:

- Getting Started – Goal setting
- Activity Planner – keep a tally of your daily movement
- Meal planner and diary – planning your meals makes it easier to stick to healthy choices.
- Weekly shopping list

The Planner is a great tool to help you kick-start your year and achieve that New Year's Resolution. The smallest of changes every day can make the biggest impact on your overall health, as they tend to be easily achievable, and sustainable in the long term. Check out the resources available at www.shapeup.gov.au

The message here is simple: You can make change happen, and improve your wellbeing, by taking the simplest of steps to improve your lifestyle. And you don't have to do it alone – check out the many free, accredited programs that can help you, buddy up with a friend, make it fun, and reward yourself for your successes. Give yourself the best possible outcomes by setting achievable goals, and remember that every day is a new day to achieve success with your new lifestyle, so don't dwell on any set-backs, and keep positive.

Nikki Wood and Rosemary Beard

UNDERSTANDING CHANGES IN VETERANS



ONLINE VIDEOS ADDRESS THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT ON VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES



When long-serving sailor Dean Faunt returned from a traumatic operational service to Iraq he experienced anger. "You know, super, super anger. It's like nothing I've felt before," he says.

When former soldier Dane Christison, a veteran of East Timor, Kuwait, and Iraq, returned to Australia, he found his stress levels went up really quickly. "I have to be aware and I have to monitor that all the time," he says. "Because I realise that your trauma can become somebody else's."

'Don't suffer in silence' is the message in a series of powerful online videos about the impact of mental ill health on current and former serving Australian Defence Force members and their families.

Developed for the Department of Veterans' Affairs in consultation with the Australian Defence Force, the nine videos cover issues such as anger, PTSD, anxiety, depression, loneliness and abuse. They feature veterans, family members and leaders within the veteran community and ADF ranks.

The videos are available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/DVAAus or via the DVA Facebook page www.facebook.com/DVAAUS

"The little things that never would've bothered them can make them very angry. And they make them angry because perhaps their values have been challenged, and perhaps their values have changed. And perhaps there's things that they don't take for granted anymore."

Army Chaplain Glynn Murphy

Army Chaplain Glynn Murphy says that ADF members coming back from very stressful operations can find themselves strangers in a strange land when they return to Australia.

So DVA and Defence have started a conversation, using the videos as a prompt. Mental health isn't easy to talk about but that must be the first step on the road to recovery.

Vietnam veteran and former MP Graham Edwards says it's no good just getting angry and then letting things settle down and doing nothing about them. "You've got emotions that you need to deal with. And you must deal with them," he says.

Defence Force Chief General David Hurley AC DSC says the ADF is a community with shared values, shared beliefs and shared standards. "We want to be the best we can, the most professional service people we can. But, if inside that environment, people are suffering, don't suffer in silence."

Around 46,500 DVA clients were known to have a mental health condition. Of these, about 28,000 have a stress disorder (including PTSD). These numbers represent only those DVA clients who have sought assistance from the Department. There are others out there who are suffering alone or in silence.

The message from the videos is that they don't need to. Reaching out is a sign of strength and more talk will help overcome the stigma of mental health.

At times confronting, the videos show the courage of seeking help and finding a way through what can be a challenging time. DVA advises veterans not to view the videos in one sitting as they can be distressing.

THERE IS HELP. AND HELP CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

For information about mental health issues, visit DVA's At Ease website www.at-ease.dva.gov.au or contact the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046.

PRIOR PREPARATION AND PLANNING IMPROVES ...



making a successful transition from the ADF



Workforce: The military is more than a job. It's a lifestyle that values attributes such as personal competence, responsibility, respect, mateship, command structures and working together to achieve a common objective. Serving personnel know what's expected of them and their unit; they know how their role contributes to their immediate mission, and the ADF's broader objectives. Many of these traits that former ADF members bring to civilian jobs are an asset. But expecting them in all civilian colleagues may be frustrating.

Stepping Out is open to all ex-ADF members and their partners from three months before separation to up to 12 months following separation. For more information please visit www.dva.gov.au/vvcs or phone 1800 011 046.

As with any effective military operation, prior preparation and planning for separation from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will give the best chance of coping with challenges.

The expertise and experience available through ADF Transition Service Centres, the Veterans' Affairs On Base Advisory Service and the Defence Community Organisation will assist members to successfully transition from a military to civilian lifestyle (see resources).

Members who have spent a significant proportion of their adult life in the military, may encounter these challenges :

- adjusting relationships as more time is spent in the family home
- re-establishing roles within social and peer groups
- transitioning to a new job, accommodation or town
- dealing with the loss of military identity
- navigating civilian healthcare systems
- acquiring different responsibilities and learning new skills.

Moving out of this unique culture into the diverse mix in the general community can be liberating but stressful.

Stepping Out is a free two day transitional program to increase knowledge and awareness of the emotional impact of separation and the reactions it may bring. Stepping Out can assist you and your partner to identify and understand potential challenges during this time and to develop strategies to strengthen your ability to adapt.

Relationships and Social Connectedness: relationship dynamics and strategies can require adjustments, particularly if service has included extended time away from loved ones due to deployment and exercises or training. Social events and structures in civilian culture are often not as formal or linked to position or employment as in the military. Social relationships may need more sustained effort.

RESOURCES

ADF Transition Support Services: <http://www.defence.gov.au/transitions/>
Defence Communities Organisation: <http://www.defence.gov.au/dco>
DVA On Base Advisory Service: http://www.dva.gov.au/serving_members/Pages/OBAS.aspx

Down Time: Taking time out before commencing a new career or training can re-energise us for the next phase of life. However, we may then reduce social contact, exercise less and indulge more freely. These can become unhealthy habits, and previous exercise and social routines hard to re-establish, particularly outside the military environment where they were part of a daily routine. Time to reflect and take stock of life may also be confronting and uncomfortable. How you respond to the challenges of separation will be unique to your circumstances. Be mindful of potential reactions and emotions prior to and during transition, and monitor your responses in the months following. Free smartphone apps, such as the *T2 Mood Tracker* (see Health Technology Review), are a simple and private way for you and family members to self monitor during this period.

CHANGE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Veteran and Community Grants



Lou Micallef, MHPE volunteer and Chef extraordinaire

We usually think about change on a personal level. Making Change Happen on a community level, is about encouraging members from your group or interested people from your community, to engage in doing something that improves their health and wellbeing. Community Change doesn't have to be large scale to make a difference. The veteran and ex-service community have a long history of joining together for a common purpose and to offer each other support.

The Cooking for One or Two Program, was first trialled more than a decade ago and has grown from humble beginnings. It is currently being revised by the Department of Veterans' Affairs' and MHPE magazine readers will be among the first to know when the revised version will be available for use. The success of the Cooking for One or Two program is just one example of how the veteran and ex-service community have made change happen.

COOKING FOR ONE OR TWO PROGRAM

When Newcastle Veterans' Access Network Manager Di McCartney suggested he take on the Coordinator role for the Cooking for One or Two in the Hunter program, MHPE volunteer Lou Micallef reckoned he "wouldn't know much about it". Fast forward five years and Lou is now considered the 'go-to guy' when it comes to running a Cooking for One or Two course on the east coast of New South Wales.

Developed in 2000 by Nutrition Australia and supported with Veteran and Community Grants funding from the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), the Cooking for One or Two program is helping veteran and general community members gain confidence in preparing healthy meals using a number of easy cooking techniques.

The program, which is currently based on Nutrition Australia's recipe book *"Adding Life to Your Years – The Cookbook"*, was initially designed

with the over-50 male in mind, however it's now proving enormously popular with both men and women who have either never had the need (or opportunity) to cook, or due to changing circumstances, now find themselves needing to acquire confidence and adjust to shopping and cooking for less people. Lou sums the program up simply, "It gives the men (and women) the confidence to be able to know what to buy, what to look for, and what would be best for themselves."

The course involves a small group of 10 to 12 getting together over six sessions. To assist, a facilitator's kit with a Group Leader's manual, the recipe book, a video tape and DVD as well as information on 'The Right Mix' is provided by DVA.

The Hunter program's initial development was facilitated by a number of agencies including DVA, The University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Population

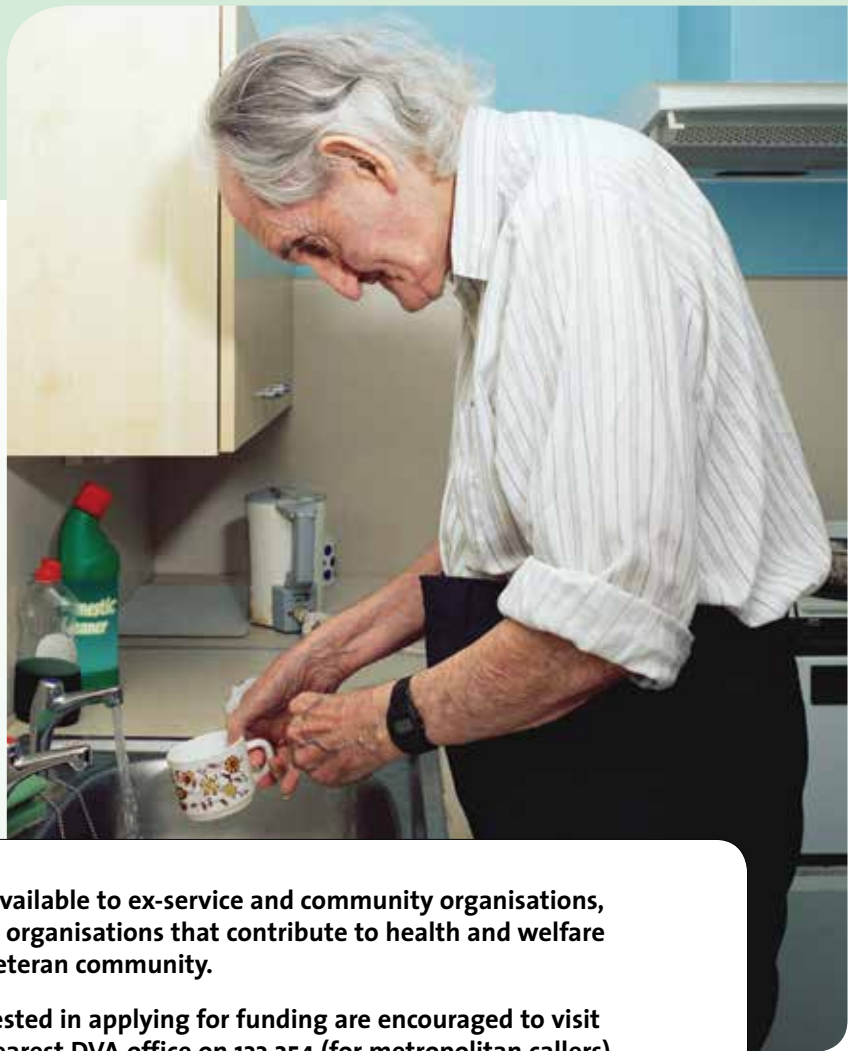
Health, with subsequent project development provided by the Newcastle District Council of RSL Sub-branches and numerous local RSL Sub-branches.

Through its Veteran and Community Grants program, DVA provided financial support for the pilot program enabling the employment of a Project Officer to coordinate cooking and induction courses and facilitate the formation of the Hunter Cooking for One or Two Steering Committee to manage the project. The success of the pilot resulted in the expansion of the program which has gone from strength to strength over the past nine years.

In 2010, DVA provided additional funding to further expand the project to buy additional cooking equipment.

The Cooking for One or Two in the Hunter program is an excellent example of how the veteran community can work collaboratively

The Cooking for One or Two program promotes the message that a healthier lifestyle involves the right mix of sensible alcohol use, good nutrition and regular exercise - thereby communicating a range of key health messages to the veteran and ex-service community. The program promotes social interaction by bringing people together to learn new skills and share a meal.



DVA Veteran and Community Grants are available to ex-service and community organisations, veteran representative groups and private organisations that contribute to health and welfare of the veteran community.

Local and community organisations interested in applying for funding are encouraged to visit www.dva.gov.au/grants or contact their nearest DVA office on 133 254 (for metropolitan callers) or 1800 555 254 (for non-metropolitan callers).

with stakeholders such as educational institutions and DVA to develop and conduct healthy lifestyle programs.

There are many other projects that are eligible for funding through Veteran and Community Grants – refer to text box below. Each year hundreds of projects that improve the health and wellbeing of members of the veteran community are funded. Since 2008, more than 1,000 organisations have benefited from over \$13 million in funding through Veteran and Community Grants.

Editor's note: MHPE would like to acknowledge the input from Lou Micallef for this article

VETERAN AND COMMUNITY GRANTS PROJECTS:

- Bus trips to increase social interaction.
- To purchase tools and equipment for Men's Sheds to enhance the programs provided to members.
- To assist with the purchase of a community bus, first aid kit and first aid training for four volunteer bus drivers.
- To purchase a camping trailer, portable gazebos and camping equipment to enhance programs provided for the veteran community.
- To purchase a BBQ to expand upon activities provided for the veteran community.
- To restore the roof and guttering system of the RSL Sub-branch section to enhance activities provided for the veteran community.
- To purchase exercise equipment to facilitate strength and mobility programs for the veteran community.

A CHAT WITH PENNY



A TALK TO PENNY ABOUT MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

My inner voice seems to tell me that many of us are born hard wired to procrastinate, to be unresponsive, dislike change, postpone important decisions and are just plain physically and intellectually lazy. Penny says that is me to a tee. A common response by all us procrastinators is, I'll do something about it after Christmas or after Easter or when the kids are at school or I'll start tomorrow etc. There is rarely I'll do it right now.

Bringing gender issues into the subject, men are very good at finding reasons why they should not, or can't deal with an important health problem. One of the challenges in men's health in the first instance, is to get them to actually talk about their health problems and then to get them to do something about it. While public health education programs sometimes help, mates and particularly wives are more likely to be successful. Often in practice when you ask a veteran why he is attending the doctor, he will say because my wife has sent me.

Retreat into denial is not unusual, even if faced with some very telling facts or health advice like, if you don't give up smoking you have a high risk of getting lung cancer. Motivation is clearly an important issue in making change happen. Doctors and nurses can give us advice, but if we are to get things done, we must find ways to motivate ourselves and motivate others.

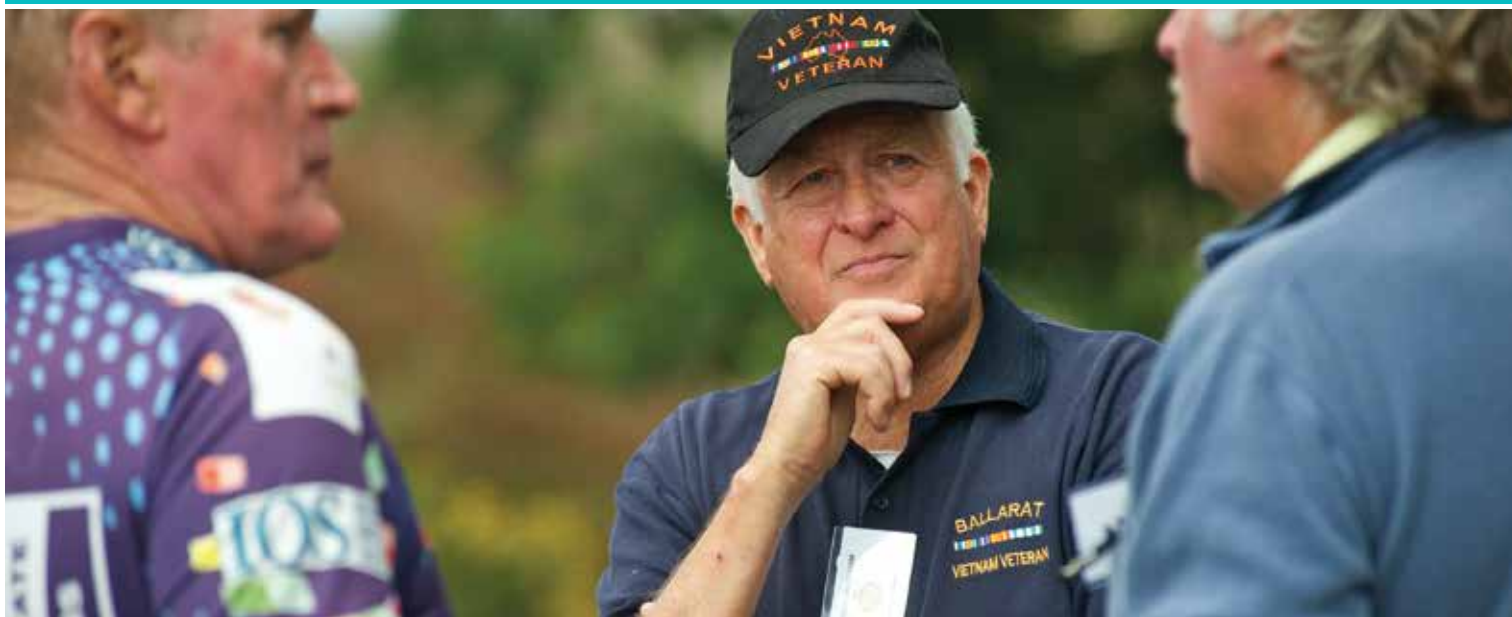
Now the big question is, what motivates men to change their behaviour? Thinking about this, the answer is probably around money, male ego, mates, wives nagging, wives charms and dare I raise the subject of the role of sex in its various forms in media and in health promotional programs. Men are also more likely to make change happen, when they are confronted by a serious health problem. We are all different in the way we respond, so change management programs that are to be effective, need to encompass a matrix of initiatives including the subtleties of sex.

The second and probably more important issue is not so much about making change happen, but making change stick. Any change one implements in our life, or in relation, to our health must be sustainable for it to work. For example, in terms of weight reduction, shock weight loss programs are simply not sustainable, but sensible lifestyle changes around diet and exercise that have more modest goals and changes of routine, are more likely to stick.

Because we really don't understand ourselves let alone others, there are many aspects of change management we simply do not understand. As a final thought I sought advice from Penny on a dog's view on how to make change happen. She responded rather hesitantly and ashamedly and said the truth is dogs are really no different than humans, it's easier to sleep than to walk, eat too much when you should say no and put off today's decisions to tomorrow. On the subject of sex, I don't like to talk about it because I've had the "operation".

Dr Graeme Killer AO
Principal Medical Adviser

Making change happen with your community at **their pace**



Health begins in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and clubs. Everyone should have the opportunity to make choices that enable them to live a long and healthy life.

We know that there is a large ex-service community and many clubs and groups that do a great job of bringing like minded people together. What we don't know about is the extent to which clubs, groups and other places make it easy for their members to make choices that are good for their health and yours too.

Leading Australian research lets us know that where we live relates to our likelihood to smoke, eat well and exercise (AIHW, 2012). And no the answer is not MOVE house, but perhaps the answer is CHANGE house. What I mean is that we have clubs in all neighborhoods, if we focus on changing the way our clubs operate to make them more health promoting, then we can make it easier for the people in our clubs to make healthy choices.

This may involve simple things like starting a walking group that meets at the club, offering healthy

choices on the menu and swapping some ingredients in the less healthy foods. A walking group ceasing to exist after a period of months is not a failure if you build from the legacy. Each attempt at making your club a healthier place to be lays the foundation for the next attempt. For example the legacy of a short-lived walking group may be the club's committee deciding to make a commitment to provide ongoing physical activity opportunities to its members as part of its 'constitution'.

Meaningful change can be subtle and slow, in fact the rate and magnitude of change may depend on the group or club that you're working with. For some planning lots of small changes over a very long period of time will work best. For others, sudden and immense change will work if the timing is right. The most important thing is to plan for LASTING change.

Once a year 'health weeks' like Veterans' Health Week (VHW) provide an opportunity, resources, profile and momentum to trial new initiatives and celebrate the success of existing and ongoing activities that are health promoting. Although, for some groups

drawing too much attention to changes can stifle progress, and deter group members from continuing on with the improvements they have been making.

The ultimate aim is for all to have the opportunity to make choices that enable them to live a long and healthy life regardless of where they live. This process can start from NOW, a lot can be achieved over time without a 'health week' (although they help). DVA Veterans' Access Network (VAN) staff can work with you to help you access funding and resources to support health and wellbeing activities that stretch beyond VHW.

Dimitri Batras, DVA National Health Promotion Adviser

BE SMART ABOUT CHANGE

Tich Tyson's Story

Paul (Tich) Tyson first met MHPE SA Coordinator Margie Gutteridge eight years ago, at a time when he was quite involved with his local RSL. In 2007, Tich was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. This didn't slow him down but change started to happen for Tich when he became a MHPE volunteer.

One of the volunteer training sessions was about *Making Change Happen*. The participants were provided with information about SMART Goals and using a template, were tasked with setting some goals - changes they wanted to make happen between the MHPE Volunteer Training and their Recall training, a period of three months.

Tich took to the exercise with gusto. One of Tich's SMART goals was to clean out his shed - he was specific about what he wanted to achieve and three months on had cleared out and cleaned up his shed and purchased new tools.

Below is the template SMART Goal tool that Tich and other new MHPE volunteers were introduced to:

SPECIFIC

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal.

MEASURABLE

Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set.

ATTAINABLE

When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true.

REALISTIC

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work.

TIMELY

A goal should be grounded within a time frame.

Spurred on by his GP and psychiatrist, Tich has set another goal - to lose 5 kg, specifically across his mid-section and maintain the weight loss.

Here is how Tich is using the SMART Goal tool to *Make Change Happen* in his life and achieve his aim of losing 5 kg around his mid-section by the end of 2013:

SPECIFIC

Attend exercise physiology program 3 times per week
Walk 10,000 steps per day - recorded on pedometer

MEASURABLE

Record weight loss and number of steps walked each week

ATTAINABLE

To lose the weight over a period of 6 months and maintain the weight loss for a further 6 months

REALISTIC

Gradual, sustainable weight loss through regular exercise, good nutrition and 3 AFDs (alcohol free days) per week

TIMELY

To assess weight loss mid-year (30 June) and end of 2013 (31 December)

Tich says that one of the most important messages that resonated for him in the MHPE program is the importance of talking to, and acting on the advice of medical professionals. We'll look forward to seeing how different Tich looks 12 months from now and how successful he has been in achieving his latest SMART Goal.

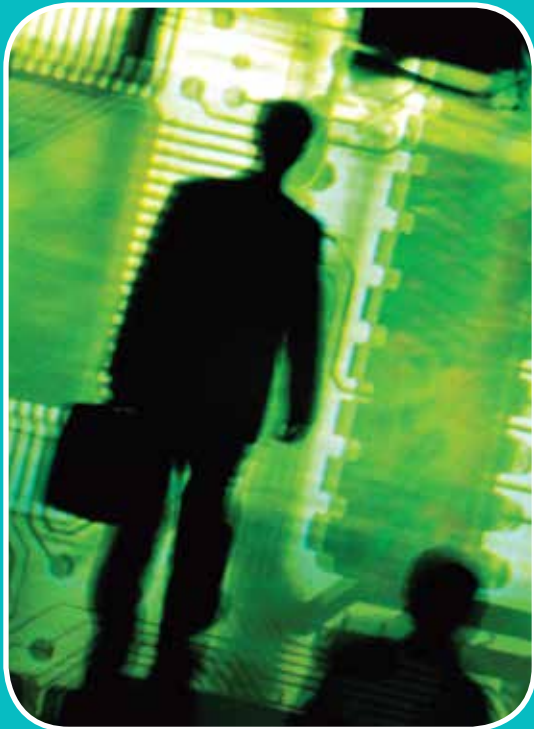
Margie Gutteridge
SA MHPE Coordinator



Tich Tyson, MHPE Volunteer

DVA's rehabilitation program also requires contracted providers working with veterans and former serving members and their families to set rehabilitation goals using the SMART approach. This is because Goal Setting is recognised as such an important part of developing a rehabilitation program. Setting goals well can contribute positively to a person's self confidence and commitment to the change they are undertaking. If a person can be clear about what they want to achieve, be realistic about the goal and the time frame and know when they have reached the goal, they are more likely to be satisfied with the outcomes. For more information about DVA's rehabilitation programs go to www.dva.gov.au/rehabilitation and read Dain's story about his rehabilitation on page 18.

ALL CHANGE



When I was a kid travelling on the old railways, “All Change” was the cry you heard when the train wasn’t going any further. I have seemed at times since to be on a life-train that isn’t going any further – a job, a fair weather friendship, a habit, a self-caused health issue, a thought loop.

The train you are on was going somewhere once – the trick is to notice that it has stopped. And then to get off. There are signs - other people keep moving past you, the view hasn’t changed for a while, some familiar sounds and movement have ceased, fewer people are still with you. The danger sign is when the cleaners arrive – people working round you, taking things away, then someone may ask if you need help.

If anyone ever asks if you need help, just say “yes”. Make it a reflex. Usually we say “no”. But they have noticed something obvious to others and bothered to tell us, even though we may brush them off - “No, I’m right, thanks.” Like hell we are! I have a sister who helps people. She just notices things that aren’t quite right that most of us would walk past, like one time a woman sitting in a stationary car with unnaturally quiet kids in the back, who was just staring ahead through the windscreen. So she tapped on the window. “Hi, is anything wrong, do you need some help?”

For a moment the woman hesitated, but she said “Yes.” She had just been kicked out

of her house with her kids. She had numbly driven round the corner and pulled up, with no idea where you go or what you do next.

And then an angel on the street had tapped on her window. Listened to her story, talked through her options with her while it was hard to think straight, cheered up the kids, found their next meal and somewhere to sleep that night, connected her with the necessary agencies, stood by her, followed up. Someone who uses change to flow on to new and better things.

Those railway messages were sometimes more puzzling to a kid. “The front half of this train is going to X, but the back half is going to Y.” So you had to

work out whether you were in the right half. Are the front and back halves of your life going in different directions? Are you in the right half? Or are you going to watch the rest of your life head off without you on board? “I could have been ... I was going to quit ... I should be where those people are ...”

Eventually of course “This train terminates here.” It comes to all of us. But better if we have come as far as we could, had a good trip, and at least ended up where we were heading for. And maybe had noticed someone going nowhere on the way, and asked “You OK, mate?”

Chris Clarke

THE BLOKE'S GUIDE TO SHAPING UP

Are your favourite jeans beginning to feel a bit snug? Are the buttons on your shirt beginning to strain against your belly? Have you had to let your belt out a few notches to make it round your waist?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions – read on.

The fact is the bigger your belly, the greater your chance of developing a chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

WHEN TO WORRY?

To assess your risk rate for developing a chronic disease, grab a tape measure and let your measurements do the talking.

For an accurate measurement:

- 1 Stand up straight
- 2 Place the tape measure directly over the skin at your waist, roughly in line with your belly button.
- 3 Breathe out normally and take your measurement.
- 4 Check your measurement against the table below to assess your risk.

YOUR WAIST MEASUREMENT*	YOUR FUTURE DISEASE RISK LEVEL
Under 94cm	You're looking good
94cm to 102cm	You have an increased risk
102cm to 110cm	Your risk is substantially increased
Over 110cm	You're in the high danger zone

* The above measurements are for a Caucasian male. Men of Chinese, South Asian and South and Central American ethnicity should aim for a waist circumference of less than 90cm.

WHAT TO DO?

The good news is healthy eating and regular physical activity can help you lose your belly and reduce your risk of developing chronic disease. And remember, it's never too late to start living a healthier life! Here are some tips to get your started.

BREAKFAST

When it comes to breakfast, more and more working men tend to either skip it, grab it on the way to work or even eat it at their desk. It doesn't matter where you have it; it's what you have that's important.

- Choose a breakfast cereal that's high in grains and fibre.
- Swap fruit juice for fresh whole fruit.
- Opt for toasted raisin bread over a muffin, donut or filled croissant.

MOVE IT TIP: Start your day with some movement, especially if you're likely to spend hours sitting at a desk. Get off the bus or tram a stop early and walk the rest of the way; pick a car park that's further away; take the stairs rather than the lift; or swap four wheels for two and cycle to work.





BOARDROOM

Office workers have heaps of extra hurdles to overcome when it comes to moving more and eating better. Chances are you'll be sitting down for much of the day, with meeting room catering to contend with from time to time.

- **Swap a large coffee for a small one, made with skim milk.**
- **Avoid the biscuits – have a piece of fruit before the meeting and you'll be less likely to be tempted by the shortbread creams.**
- **Meeting over lunch? Put in your request for sandwiches early – ask for wholegrain bread, no butter and lots of salad in the fillings.**

MOVE IT TIP: Swap a sitting meeting for a walking meeting; during the day use the printer or bathroom that's further away from your desk; or take a brisk walk around the block between meetings.



THE BLOKE'S GUIDE TO SHAPING UP **continued**



ON THE ROAD

If you spend most of your day behind the wheel, keeping your waistline under 94cm can be a real challenge. Not only is most of your day spent sitting, but the available food at roadside pit stops is often fatty and unhealthy.

- **Ditch the meat pie for a wholegrain steak sandwich with salad.**
- **Choose water over soft drink or flavoured milk.**
- **Try a plain hamburger with lots of salad. Leave off the bacon, cheese and fried egg.**
- **Swap buying lunch for BYO – you'll save dollars and your waistline!**

MOVE IT TIP: If you spend a lot of time behind the wheel, take regular breaks. Get out of your vehicle to stretch and jog on the spot. Aim to get 30 minutes of exercise each day.

AT THE PUB

For some blokes, a drink at the pub with your mates is a good way to end the working week. Don't let Friday afternoon drinks undo all your good work.

- **Opt for light beer over full strength.**
- **Choose diet soft drinks or soda water over sugary mixers.**
- **Try a half strength mixed drink.**
- **Swap the over the counter chicken parmigiana and chips for grilled steak, fish or chicken with a fresh salad on the side.**

MOVE IT TIP: Think about swapping Friday night drinks for a game of indoor cricket or ten pin bowling.

BBQ

Who doesn't love an Aussie BBQ? When the weekend comes, wield the BBQ tongs and dish up a healthy family feast.

- **Serve vegetable sticks or water crackers with salsa for a healthy way to start the meal.**
- **Swap sausages for lean steak, fish or chicken skewers threaded with chunks of skinless chicken and vegetables.**
- **Remove all visible fat and skin from meat and chicken before grilling.**
- **Go easy on the beer!**

MOVE IT TIP: For a true blue Aussie BBQ, throw in a game of cricket, football or soccer, or build in a family walk around the block.

VETERANS' HEALTH WEEK

Time to start considering Veterans' Health Week 2013 - 'Physical Activity'



If you read the November edition of the MHPE magazine you may have noted the article on the success of Veterans' Health Week (VHW) in 2012. The time has come to start considering VHW 2013. The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) will again be partnering with ex-service and community organisations to organise activities that will benefit the health and wellbeing of the veteran community in the lead up to and during VHW this year. This year's week will be from Monday 14 to Sunday 20 October 2013.

The theme for 2013 is **"Physical activity"**. Physical activity participation is good for general health and there is an appropriate type and amount for each and every person. And VHW 2013 will provide the tools and information necessary to help participants better understand their body and its limits.

Whilst VHW is still some time away, it's a good time now to consider how to get the most out of the Week. Perhaps by starting or increasing the amount of physical activity you are involved in. It's also a good idea, especially if you haven't undertaken any form of physical activity for some time, to talk with your GP and get them to give you the once over prior to starting.

Many groups are keen to get going from now, and that is great. Why not look at organising an activity or activities, that you can start with now and then use VHW to celebrate your achievement.

There are a wide variety of activities that you can do during the big week in October to celebrate your achievements and commitment to ongoing physical activity. Some of the suggestions that were made by Event Organisers in 2012 included:

Masters games theme, fun activities, ballroom dancing, gardening day, strength building exercises, outdoor activities, workouts - cardio/weights, tai chi, yoga, walk, start a heart foundation walking group, fun run, fitness class, bowling (lawn and ten pin), golf day.

The above are only suggestions; there are many more activities that will fit with this year's theme that you can consider trying throughout the year leading into VHW 2013.

To seek assistance, or to find out more about VHW contact DVA on 133 254 or 1800 555 254 for regional callers, email vhw@dva.gov.au or visit our website at www.dva.gov.au/vhw.htm for the latest information.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Getting back on your feet



Dain Cairns

WHY IS REHABILITATION IMPORTANT?

Rehabilitation can assist you to move forward toward a new career, take charge and regain control of your life.

Rehabilitation can contribute towards your successful transition from the ADF to civilian life.

Rehabilitation programs are developed jointly with you and tailored to your specific needs if you are injured or become ill as a result of your ADF service.

The whole-of-person perspective of rehabilitation aims to address all aspects of your life including body, mind and life.

Your attitudes to recovery; the level of support provided through friendships; connection with family; and your goals will significantly impact on your recovery.

Getting the right help as early in your recovery as possible, and being supported is vital to recovery.

Returning to the workforce, either full time or part time is important. Where this is not possible, maintaining or improving your general welfare, daily living and social engagement would be the goal.

Dain joined the RAAF as a pilot trainee through the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) in 2005. He was medically discharged in 2007 after receiving unsuccessful corrective surgery in 2006. Dain indicates that his injury has had a major impact on both himself and his family. It restricted him from doing many every day activities and prevented him participating in social and sporting events, even where minimal walking was required. As a result he has had to rely quite heavily on family and friends for support.

After many years of struggling with his conditions he sought further expert medical advice. Dain then underwent a second round of corrective surgery which saw some significant improvement, he says that "At my worst, I was unable to jog more than a few hundred metres and required the use of handrails when going up stairs, but I can now run up to 5km". Dain still has symptoms of his conditions; however it has greatly improved with the support of DVA in getting further medical advice and treatment.

Dain says "DVA assisted me by funding and supporting me to undertake a Bachelor of Business (Human Resource Management) through the University of Tasmania. In addition, DVA assisted me with the completion of my Commercial Pilots Licence and Instructor Rating, which

has enabled me to get an equivalent job to that which I would have been employed as in the ADF". Approval for a DVA rehabilitation client to undertake tertiary studies is based on consideration of factors relating to the client and their circumstances, including the clients prior study record. As Dain was an ADFA Officer Cadet at the time of his discharge, his undergraduate study and pilot training was an extension of the study and training he had commenced at ADFA.

Dain says that his experience of rehabilitation since being discharged has been flexible and that "DVA were understanding of the practical challenges I had to face. DVA have been great in helping with my transition from the ADF and my rehabilitation." He says he only wished he had known about their services prior to discharging so that he could have been better prepared.

Dain is currently employed in two different roles; one part-time as a People and Culture Manager in Human Resources at a privately owned museum in Tasmania, and the other as a casual Flying Instructor. He notes that "Regular contact with my delegate enabled me to stay focused and on track to achieve my desired goals".

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

One of life's great certainties is that no matter what job you have or what social or interest groups you belong to, you may at some time encounter people who are negative, who oppose your ideas, who challenge your beliefs or who simply annoy you for no obvious reason. You may also encounter some people who feel the same way about you.

This can be a devastating realisation. Growing up we often tell ourselves that all our problems with other people will go away when we start a new job, move to a new town or find a new hobby. For a lucky few this is the case, but for most of us, encountering people who 'push our buttons', in a small or major way, is just part of life. There is little we can do to stop this from happening.

Most people are fundamentally decent and do not intend to deliberately hurt others. Sometimes when faced with a seemingly hopeless situation, some people try to make themselves feel better by bringing others to that same emotional place, even if this is not their specific intent. When confronted by a difficult person a natural inclination

The VVCS - Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service provides a range of free support services to veterans and their families, including counselling and group programs that may assist you in dealing with the difficult people in your life.

To find out more about VVCS eligibility and services please visit www.dva.gov.au/vvcs or phone 1800 011 046.

of some people is to challenge them in an attempt to protect our beliefs or defend our views. Whilst scoring a few points may make us feel better in the short term (and sometimes there is a valid reason for a confrontation with a difficult person) generally such interactions can leave us feeling drained and can ultimately bring feelings of guilt or regret.

Try to remind yourself that like all opinions we come across in life (including our own) their views are borne from experiences, education and perspective – an interpretation of facts, not absolute truths.

You can't change people's behaviour, but you can choose your response.

What can you do?

- **When faced with a confrontation with a difficult person ask yourself, where will responding to this person get me?**
- **Next time you encounter a difficult person try to think about how miserable they might be feeling to react to the world as they do.**
- **Can you change your level of involvement with this person?**

It can often be hard to decide whether to just let others express their feelings or views, or whether you should challenge these. **Responding with negativity to someone who is in a negative place often triggers further negative and combative responses.** A downward spiral can result where no one wins and all participants end up feeling unhappy. If you feel resentment towards a difficult person building to such a level that it begins to impact on quality of life, if you focus on that person when your relaxing or spending time with your family and friends, if thoughts of interacting with a difficult person prevents you from getting a good night's sleep, it's time to change something.

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service



INTERNATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2013 HEALTH SNAPSHOTS

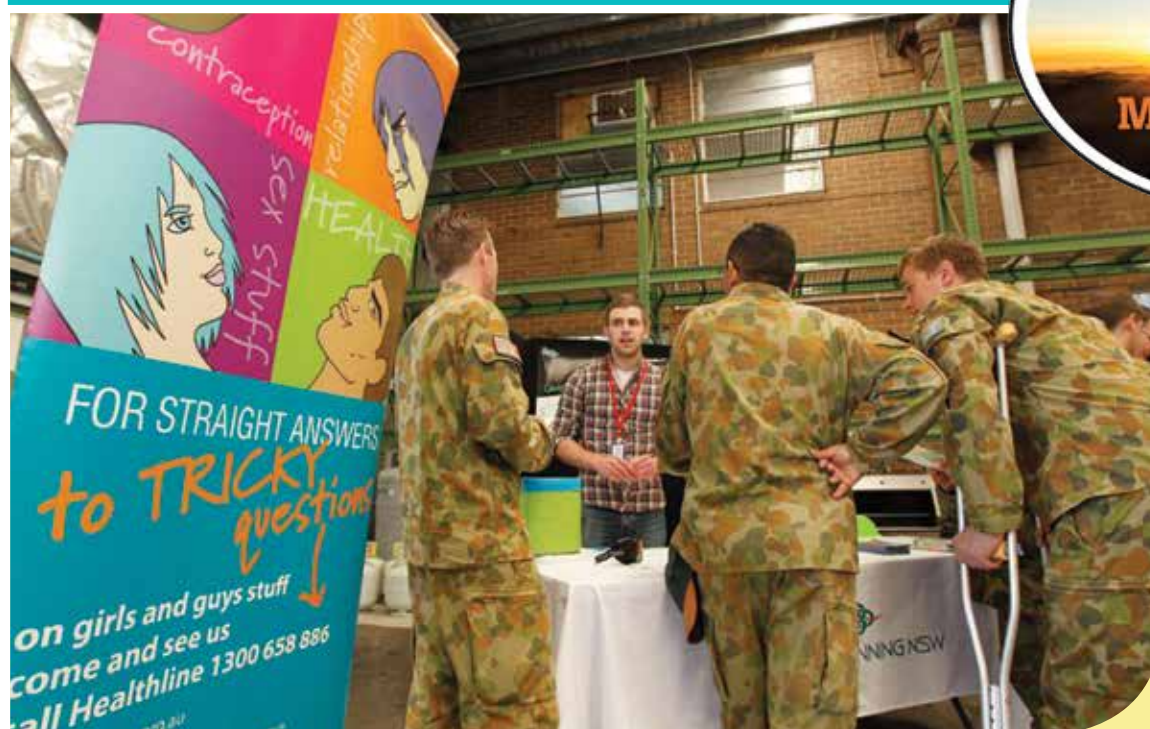


IMAGE LEFT:
Members of
No. 1 Combat
Communications
Squadron (1CCS)
speak to Mr Ben
Davis of Family
Planning New
South Wales
during Men's
Health Week.

What will **YOU** do?

International Men's Health Week 2013 runs from June 10-16 with events and activities across Australia. It is an opportunity to showcase community actions being undertaken to improve the health and wellbeing of men and boys at a local level.

The Week is an ideal opportunity for individuals, organisations and businesses to create and run events and promotions that encourage people to become aware of the factors that are making or breaking the health of men and boys in today's society.

Central Focus With Local Action

The Week recognises that the appropriate approaches and priorities for improving male health will differ markedly across the country. Local, tailored approaches are the most effective way of connecting with local communities about the health issues that affect them most. To this end, the Week operates with a very open central theme that can be purposed and interpreted to enable local communities to shape what they do for the week in a suitable way.

The best people to engage men and boys about actions for better health are those that live and work alongside them every day. Local people have an intimate and personal understanding of the issues that men and boys face in a real-world sense. Different communities have different health priorities and we think that the best way to make a difference to men's health in Australia is to enable people to focus on the issues that count to them, while providing

ways to showcase their efforts and successes to the health community as a whole.

The 2013 theme is 'Health Snapshots: What Will YOU Do For Better Male Health in 2013?' and this theme encourages communities to plan and run events ('snapshots' of health). Our major message is to encourage communities to take action, no matter how large or small, because collectively these actions build better health outcomes for men and boys.

The tide is turning towards greater recognition of the health needs of Australian men and this change is a result of continuous, everyday efforts by people concerned about the relatively poorer health outcomes of males in Australia.



IMAGE LEFT:
Kristy Lenon
of Red Cross
Parramatta,
speaks to
members of
No. 1 Combat
Communications
Squadron
regarding drug
and alcohol
awareness
during Men's
Health Week.

Men's Health Your Way

In the run up to June, organisers of International Men's Health Week will be providing resources to help you run events and promote your event to local audiences. Here are five simple things we recommend:

- Plan an event that provides an entry into discussions about health. The most enjoyable men's health events often centre on men's interests first and later provide opportunities for discussing health and wellbeing, rather than being set up to address a specific health issue.
- When you have some details worked out, register your event on the website at www.menshealthweek.org.au. Every event gets a free profile page, giving you exposure for your event and you will be sent a special events-only resources pack to help you run contests and promotions.
- Work out early which media you will work with to publicise the event. Let local media outlets know early on what you will be doing and you can usually have the event listed on event calendars and community guides at no cost. Invite local journalists along as well as you will often get photographed or an article in the paper. This will help you showcase what you achieved!
- Make contact with local health services. Sometimes people in the public health system don't have the time or resources to produce a whole event but will often be pleased to link in with local events as contributors. You can draw on their health expertise and put more of your time towards other aspects of the event.
- Lastly, send a little follow-up note to let us know how you went and what successes you had. Let us know what worked for you and what practices you would recommend other people interested in men's health might consider in their events. We now have a men's health clearinghouse that aims to find practices that work and resources people can use in the many different areas of male health. By sharing what you found, we can provide a resource that helps other people run better programs for men and boys. Please take a look at www.mengage.org.au.

We can't wait to see all the events that take shape over the next few months! Show your community that the health and wellbeing of men and boys is important.

If you need any help, please email menshealth@uws.edu.au and we will be pleased to help you out.

International Men's Health Week in Australia is supported by the Men's Health Information & Resource Centre based at the University of Western Sydney as part of its core agreement with the NSW Ministry of Health.

David Thompson
Media and Communications Officer
Men's Health Information and Resource Centre

MY HEALTH RULES

M HPE Volunteer Representatives Laurie Harrison (TAS), Kathy Behrendt (SA) and Malcolm "Tiny" Small (WA) have taken up the 12 Week Challenge. www.shapeup.gov.au

Here are their Challenge profiles using the SMART goal tool (refer to page 12).

In the July issue we'll find out whether they were able to achieve their goals.



LAURIE HARRISON TASMANIA

I retired from work 11 years ago following many years of continued health problems due to injuring my back. Over those years my lifestyle changed so much, that eventually I could no longer enjoy a daily run, play golf, or do a gentle bike ride.

In time, along came painful joints and I was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. I've had many operations to keep me mobile including a disc replacement in my back, neck fusion and just last year a knee replacement. I've been fortunate to have the same GP throughout this time who I visit regularly for injections for my arthritis treatment. Since committing to the 12 week challenge, I have been diagnosed with high blood pressure. My GP is assisting me to get my BP down to a healthy range before I start the Challenge. The 12 week Challenge has given me a new lease of life to have a go and get back on track.

CHALLENGE START DATE: 1 March 2013

SPECIFIC: Walk for 30 min twice a day with my son's dog or my wife. Change my diet a little by cutting out the fats that I eat. Reduce portion sizes at meal times. Reduce waistline by 10cms if I can.

MEASURABLE: Keep a record of my weight and complete the activity and meal planner weekly

ATTAINABLE: Changing to a healthier diet, eat more fruit drink a lot more water rather than coffee. I have the full support of my family and I can't wait.

REALISTIC: To lose weight slowly and don't try to get it all off in the first few weeks.

TIMELY: Weigh myself weekly, record my weight loss and keep a close eye on my progress.

This issue's tear-out insert is on **Readiness to Change**. It includes the *Stages of Change* model developed by Prochaska and DiClemente. The key strength of this theory of behaviour change is that it allows you to reflect on which stage you might be at in your quest to make changes in your own life. This is useful because it can enable you to make a realistic assessment of what you might need to do next and prepare for the set backs that might follow.

If we consider the MHPE Volunteer Representatives undertaking the 12 Week Challenge, Laurie is at the preparation stage and Kathy and Tiny have started the action stage.

The S.M.A.R.T approach to planning your change journey helps you to focus your goals and keep you on track as you progress through the different (and normal) stages of change.



KATHY BEHRENDT SOUTH AUSTRALIA

About 10 years ago, I was diagnosed with Metabolic syndrome and was put on a special eating plan. By following this for some time, I lost a lot of weight, but it was such an extreme diet, I had no hope of following it for very long. However I did learn a lot of very valuable lessons, regarding sensible eating, but because I love baking, it became very easy to eat it all too and now I find myself once again in danger of diabetes so time to take action and take action I will!!!!

Public humiliation is enough to carry me through (I hope).

CHALLENGE START DATE: 18 February 2013

SPECIFIC: Walk 10,000 steps at least 5 days per week and increase the number of skips. Decrease waist measurement from 92cm to 80cm or under. Reduce portion sizes at meal times. Reduce sugar intake.

MEASURABLE: Keep a record of steps walked and skips achieved. Enjoy the looser fit of my clothes – may have to buy more!!!!

ATTAINABLE: Will go to bed early and enjoy the magnificent sunrise as I pound the pavement on my way to 10,000 steps. The absolute bonus is the fantastic peace and quiet, whilst I plan my day.

REALISTIC: I live in a rural area, so I'm hoping the lack of a gym or sports physiologist will not hinder me and it will be fun, not work.

TIMELY: Assess at the 6 week mark and make any changes needed, to achieve a decrease in waist measurement.



MALCOLM "TINY" SMALL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Since retiring from my job at BP 10 years ago which was a fairly active manual type job I have tended to become more of a sit down and play computer games type person and the stomach bore much of my weight gain.

Two years ago I was accepted onto the VVCS Heart Health programme, a big wakeup call as to how unfit I had become, this then lead on to joining the Activate Life Rehabilitation programme, a programme designed to get veterans back into healthy bodies by strengthening deteriorated joints and muscles. I started with two visits to the gym a week working with an exercise physiologist, but it wasn't enough to get rid of the "pot belly"

The 12 weeks challenge has given me the incentive to get into better shape and the SMART plan looks like a good place to start

CHALLENGE START DATE: 18 February 2013

SPECIFIC: Attend the gym 4 times a week and do extra time on the tread mill starting at 10 mins. Stick to a better diet and cut out the occasional bucket of chips. Reduce portions at meal times. Reduce waistline by 5cms.

MEASURABLE: My exercise physiologist will monitor my weight. Complete the activity and meal planner/diary and healthy checklist each week to see how I'm going.

ATTAINABLE: Changing to a healthier diet, swapping ice-creams for fruit, when eating out choose the healthier menu items will all assist with weight loss. I have the full support of my family and exercise physiologist.

REALISTIC: To lose the weight steadily, and sustainably: not rush to get it all off in the first few weeks.

TIMELY: Weigh weekly, and get my exercise physiologist to measure after 6 weeks to record my progress, then again after the 12 weeks

Is successful change about self control?



It is common in medical practice to offer advice about the importance of lifestyle change. In reality, most individuals are aware of the need to cease smoking, consume less alcohol, exercise more, eat healthier and lose weight. Despite good intentions, including New Year's resolutions, few appear to be able to heed the advice. Motivation usually changes when a major life event occurs, such as a heart attack, but not always.

I recently read the book: 'Willpower. Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength', by Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney, which is reviewed elsewhere in this magazine. This book is easy to read and discusses much of the research conducted over the past decades on willpower. I was interested in the scientific insights into why people have difficulty changing.

Willpower, that is resisting temptation, requires energy. There seems to be a finite level of willpower before resistance drops. This may explain why recovering alcoholics learn the mnemonic 'HALT' to warn them of an increased risk of relapse. HALT means hungry, angry, lonely and tired. I suspect that this applies to many other temptations as well.



The other insight I gained was that substituting an action for a temptation required less energy. For instance, if someone fancied a cream cake, then they were more successful in avoiding eating it if they decided to eat something healthy first and then thought about the tempting morsel. So this is the scientific basis of the 'Swap It' programs also discussed in this edition.

The other point made is that success is more likely if change is made to one area at a time, rather than a radical overhaul of all areas. Self control was suggested as the important skill to have, and this can be learnt, developed and strengthened. Self control is considered to be an innate human trait, as it is essential for effective functioning with groups of people. We all need to control our basic urges to be accepted in society. Those of us who have experienced military service have learned self control or self discipline to a very high degree. Military training has made certain behaviours automatic, such as marching, standing still on parade or saluting. This shows

the value of repetition of required behaviours. We just need to apply these same methods of training in self control into the lifestyle behaviours we wish to adopt.

Making a public declaration of the changes we intend reinforces our motivation as we do not wish to perceive ourselves as failures among our friends and communities. The saying 'looking after our mates' is a powerful ally in making change.

Dare I say it, the book gave me 'food for thought'.

Dr Warren Harrex
Senior Medical Adviser

MAKING CHANGE – MY WAY with a little help from my friends

As I stare at the blank screen on my computer and ponder on why and how did I make change happen in my life, at the age of 61 yrs. – yes an ole Sapper, I offer with my hand on my heart, the following story of me, 47945 Capt. D.C. Francis (RAE) (Ret'd) – (Spr – PSO Capt.), to all veterans and their families.

The why comes from 25 years as an Army Engineer (RAE), discharging in 2000 to take on a National Operations Manager job in Sydney, and facing a messy separation from my wife of 23 years.

As the job was almost 24/7, I had what I thought was a mental breakdown after 12 months. So, with what little money I had left, I purchased a second hand 30 foot off road caravan, said my goodbyes and headed north. I guess I could go on forever about this pilgrimage, but suffice to say, that after being advised, by a Sydney surgeon in 2002, that I had maybe five years to live, because of a head tumour, I thought my life was over. At this time I was still on the road and drinking myself every day into a senseless stupor.

I couldn't handle to be seen by anyone or to be with anyone. I would shop in the major supermarkets in the early hours of the morning between 2 and 4 am, then lock myself away till I had to move on. I would never mingle in



crowds or talk with anyone, and would often cry myself to sleep along with a hefty dose of alcohol.

My travels ended abruptly in Coffs Harbour, on 24 April 2010 when my Nissan Patrol was written off in the floods. I cannot remember much during the 25 – 26 April 2010. Enough to say, I found myself, thanks to a DVA Rep and a GP, (both from Coffs Harbour and still close friends) in the St John of God Hospital in Richmond NSW. I was “interned” for 4-5 months which involved a session of detox and a course on how to live with PTSD.

One of the dominant themes of my story is that we (vets/ex-long term service personnel), are in danger of allowing one, or all, of our emotions, whether it be lack of self- esteem, lack of self-respect, fear, loneliness, anger, depression and even social isolation and self- medication, to take over and be used as a crutch or an excuse for what is considered not normal behaviour.

The changes in my life started during the stay at the St John of God Hospital. I guess some of us need a size 10 boot up the rear to wake us up and realize we are not alone. The wonderful staff and the amazing support of fellow “inmates” - will remain one of my heart's strengths forever.

My story is ongoing and, I know from my travels, not unfamiliar to many of the vets (both younger and older). Personally, I have found that problems such as mental health issues, medical and dietary problems and problems with physical activity are best treated by professionals and your first step is to contact your local DVA rep.

I feel safe in saying that I am where I am today due to the professional and one-on one support of the volunteers in the Men's Health Peer Education program. Please remember “You are not alone”

David Francis, MHPE volunteer

KELLIE'S HEROES

I was asked by the editor for my thoughts on “Why I think our group (Heart Health Casino 2008) has been able to make positive lifestyle and health changes and maintain the change”. Initially I agreed, then when I began to think of the answers to these questions, I found myself sitting in front of the keyboard struggling with an answer.

What were the reasons? Does mateship come into it, or is it the more modern version “social inclusion”, or perhaps something more subtle. Perhaps it's been an interaction of feeling physically better, noticing that the mood swings are no longer as bad, and that motivation had improved. Looking back, all of the above and then some. One of the reasons is that back in 2008 when we first began the Heart Health course, the people who had won the tender for our region chose as their instructor an exceptional lady named Kellie Handford. Despite her early misgivings there was soon established a great rapport between her and our diverse group. Her enthusiasm and professionalism inspired us to push ourselves that little bit further.

We became quite the team, taking part in other activities such as “Relay For Life” and “Veterans' Health Week” - this includes climbing Mt Warning which we've

done five times! When we had finished our 50 weeks of the Heart Health course, some of us decided that it would be foolish to stop as we realised that without our instructor and the fellowship of the group, we would probably not keep up the good work. As a group we approached Kellie and asked if she would be willing to keep training us if we paid a small fee. Kellie agreed, so the group continued on at Casino even managing to recruit a few more vets to the group.

We were approached by a group from Kyogle, if we would be interested in attending if they established a gymnasium at the Kyogle showgrounds. Naturally we locals were interested - some of us had been doing a round trip of about 110 kms - but naturally the Casino group were quite happy to stay where they were. Once again we asked our instructor if she was interested in coming to Kyogle to train us. Kellie said yes but there needed to be enough people involved. Could we attract more vets to our cause? We raised the idea at our next sub-branch meeting and a few initially said they would give it a go.

Perhaps they had noticed the changes in us and thought it can't be bad. Well since then things have blossomed and we have an attendance of vets from their late fifties to our oldest vet at 92. Our local GP and his clinic enthusiastically supported this venture. As you can see this change in our lifestyle has helped other veterans make likewise decisions, so always be aware that what you do for yourself, can also assist others in maintaining their physical and mental health.

Mark Hills, MHPE NSW & ACT Volunteer Representative

P.S

The “Fitness Australia Fitness Professional of the Year” was Kellie Handford using visual presentation of a group of doddering old you knows as her promotion - it was probably our obvious good looks and skill which got her the prize!!!!????



Kellie Handford and her recruits. Front row L-R: Jack McDonough, Graham Walker, Kellie Handford, Doug Grove and Johnny Mazzaracca. Back row L-R: Bruce McKenzie, Dave Painter, Phil Reynolds, Merv English, Mark Hills.

Q&A WITH KELLIE HANDFORD

Q: WHY DO YOU THINK THE GROUP HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE POSITIVE LIFESTYLE AND HEALTH CHANGES AND MAINTAIN THE CHANGE?

A: This is the million dollar question that I was asked at least 50 times at the National Fitness Australia Awards night. Every gym owner/employee that I spoke with had run a "Heart Health" program, yet this is the only group still standing after four years. There are so many reasons that it has succeeded, the DVA support of Heart Health would be the most important. It has been essential to make these initiatives available to all veterans and to actively encourage vets to choose health instead of hospital.

It is my professional opinion, that the group has succeeded because the fellas and I have a mutual respect and admiration for each other. They are accountable, loyal and dependable as I have been to them.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Heart Health Program is a free 12 month exercise program for all Australian veterans, administered by the Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service. All veterans are encouraged to maintain health gains they achieved in the program following its completion. For more information on the Heart Health Program please phone 1800 011 046.

PARTNERS – A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships Australia®

Starting a new relationship usually brings great excitement and high expectations. Emotions are at a peak, life is rosy and we want the relationship and the intensity to last forever. But most people, as they move into a new relationship, have attachments and commitments to many other relationships already – their families, ex-partners, children and friends. The new couple relationship often means that there will have to be some changes in these other important attachments. Sometimes this happens easily but for many couples it can mean ongoing negotiations, which at times can be difficult.

In long-term relationships we often assume we know all there is to know about our partners. But people change and it is very easy to lose the sense of connection that we once had.

HOW CAN I CHANGE MY RELATIONSHIP?

Ask yourself how you would like your relationship to be different. If you know, commit yourself to making the changes you need to make. One small change can sometimes make a difference to a lot of big things. Relationships need to be looked after. Why not try the following:

- Spend time alone together.
- Develop common interests.
- Really listen, and try to understand what your partner is saying.
- Tell your partner when you are unhappy about something.
- Try to find solutions that are okay for both of you.

HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE MY PARTNER TO COMMUNICATE MORE OPENLY?

To encourage open communication, each person must first accept responsibility for his/her own feelings. It is important to be honest, as honesty is at the heart of good communication. Be aware of the following:

- The only thing we have total control over is our own thoughts, attitudes and actions.
- Set aside time for both of you to talk, as talking about what is happening and how it affects you is the first step.
- Try to tell your partner exactly what you are feeling and thinking, even if it might upset him or her.
- State what you want and be prepared to negotiate.
- Don't forget, change can be painful and scary, so let your partner know that you understand this.
- Listen to your partner, put aside your own thoughts for the time being, and try to understand his or her intentions, needs and wants.

RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA

www.relationships.org.au 1300 364 277

Relationships Australia's booklet *Partners – A Guide to Successful Relationships* is full of useful advice for those couples seeking to build a successful relationship.

It covers topics such as:

- expectations that come with starting a new relationship
- what makes a fulfilling adult relationship
- how to find out what your partner's relationship and life needs are
- the sort of issues that need to be discussed in intimate relationships
- making time to talk about how the relationship is going
- how can I encourage my partner to communicate more openly?
- making the effort
- the importance of good communication
- ways to improve relationships
- recognising early warning signs of relationship problems.

**Download a copy at www.relationships.org.au
or phone 1300 364 277**



KEEPING YOUR MIND ACTIVE

Challenging your brain with puzzles and games can keep your brain active and improve its physiological functioning.

WORD CHANGE

Can you morph one word into another by just changing one letter at a time?

TREE	CAPE	FIRE
FLED	MORE	
		PARK

HINK PINKS

Hink Pinks are fun rhyming word riddles. The answer to the riddle is a pair of words that rhyme with each other. For example: **LARGE FELINE would be FAT CAT.**

- MOVE, FEMALE DEER
- 24 HOURS WITH TOYS
- 50% GIGGLE
- A TOTALLY COOL DAD
- A BIRDS FOOT DEFECT
- A BLUE-GREEN MORAY
- A BORING CHOO-CHOO
- A BOY SLUG WITH A SHELL
- A CAP THAT GOT SAT ON
- A CLOUDY 24 HOURS

MATHS CHALLENGE

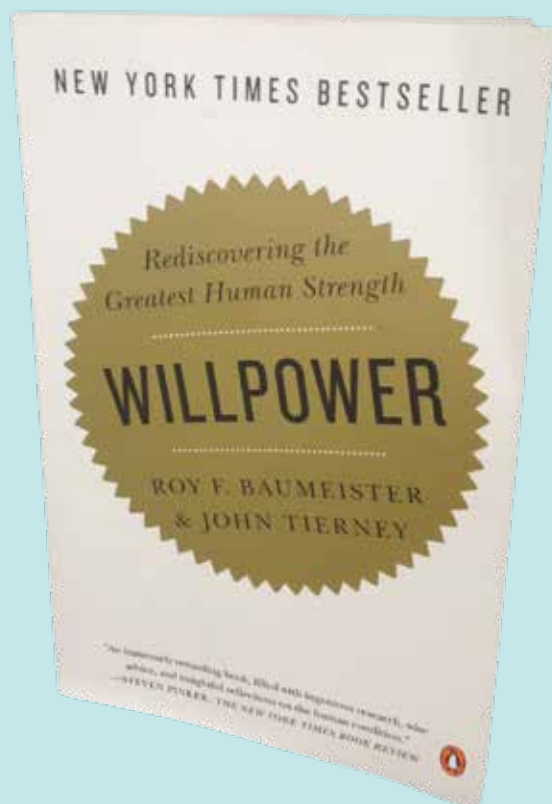
Try to fill in the missing numbers. Use the numbers 1 through 9 to complete the equations.

Each number is only used once. Each row is a maths equation. Each column is a maths equation. Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.

	+		-	4	1
-		+		+	
	x	7	-		29
-		x		-	
8	x		-		-1
-10		9		1	

BOOK REVIEW: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength: Willpower

by Roy F. Baumeister & John Tierney



Have you ever heard yourself say ‘Control yourself’ when eating Hungry Jacks or having just ‘one’ more beer? We all say it, well we mostly think it. Of course, eating and drinking are one of the few simple pleasures in life and it’s OK to enjoy it, but after a while you decide one day to put on your favourite pair of jeans and you discover that they don’t quite fit. You then start to contemplate eating healthier and exercising. You start saying to yourself, I’ll start tomorrow.

From procrastinating to saving for our retirement to exercising, willpower can play a significant role. Willpower is a powerful mental tool that can be used to change ourselves in small and large ways – it gives us the strength to persevere and attain our goals. Roy F. Baumeister, a pioneering psychologist, collaborates with the New York Times writer John Tierney to revolutionise our understanding of this most coveted *human* strength.

Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength: Willpower, discusses the significance of willpower and self-control - no matter what you want to achieve. Baumeister and Tierney conclude that willpower is one of the most important predictors of success in life. Baumeister’s research has discovered that how we control and manage our thoughts, emotions, and willpower will influence how we cope with difficult tasks.

Baumeister and Tierney compared willpower to a muscle: by exercising the muscle, it gets stronger, however like a muscle it can get tired if you over use it. Therefore Baumeister and Tierney suggest starting out small by developing day-to-day goals to build up willpower. Aiming for huge and quick transformations may fail and seem impossible. Change is slow. For example, if you can’t bring yourself to cut out chocolate and sweets completely from your diet, try cutting down to one or two sweets per day. Effective planning should even out your willpower. Repetition and practice becomes a habit.

Of course, you can’t control or even predict the stresses that come into your life, which can act as a hindrance to completing your goals, but you can use the calm periods, or at least the peaceful moments, to plan an offense. Baumeister and Tierney state, that if you want to:

“...start an exercise program, learn a new skill, quit smoking, and reduce drinking, make one or two lasting changes towards a healthy diet, that these are all done best during times of relatively low demand, when you can allocate much of your willpower to the task”.

Tierney and Baumeister have written a very interesting and aspiring book that provides fascinating information and advice on willpower itself, and enables a more progressive setting and meeting of our goals. This book delves into human psychology, and helps us understand our battles with temptation and provides useful insights into our willpower. The book is a must read for those who want to become fitter, to reduce or quit smoking, eat healthier, work more efficiently and especially, to those of you who want to fit into those favourite pair of jeans.

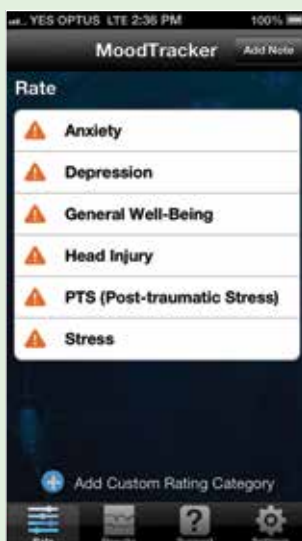
Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength: Willpower, by Roy F. Baumeister & John Tierney, can be ordered online from most bookstore websites.

Happy reading:

“Success is conditional – but it’s within your reach as long as you have the discipline to try, and try again.”

Sylvia Wendlandt, DVA Social Health Policy

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY: App Review



T2 MOOD TRACKER (FREE, IPHONE, IPAD & IPOD TOUCH COMPATIBLE)

There is probably no better way to make change happen than to track many of your emotional experiences over time, and then be able to share these with your health professional. The T2 Mood Tracker allows you to monitor your moods for depression, PTSD, brain injury, general well-being, anxiety and stress. Custom scales allow you to rate your mood, and then these can be converted into graphs, and these can then be viewed as a result over a period of time. You can add notes to describe anything that may affect your moods (for example, medications). You can even add further categories, all the time knowing that your information can be protected by a PIN.



HABITSEED (FREE, IPHONE, IPAD & IPOD TOUCH COMPATIBLE)

There are quite literally apps for all sorts of things, and this handy app may just provide you with some guidance to start and then continue with changes in your life. The app comes with seven pre-loaded 'habits' that you may wish to change in your life, including to stop smoking or to start exercising. If you choose one you will then be asked at the end of the day if you have achieved that goal for that day. At the end of 21 days a 'habit tree' will grow. The philosophy behind this is that creating a habit is like growing a tree; it requires a lot of attention in the beginning, and becomes stronger over time. You have the ability to add other habits or behaviours you may wish to change. It is an app that, whilst not being complicated, may just help you make those important changes in your life.



FOODSWITCH (FREE, COMPATIBLE WITH APPLE AND ANDROID DEVICES)

We should all be attempting to make healthier choices regarding food products we purchase. Foodswitch may just assist – it allows the user to easily scan a product's barcode when shopping, and then for that product's nutritional value (total and saturated fat, sugar and salt components) to be listed. These components are colour coded in red (a less healthy choice), amber (an okay choice) and green (a healthier choice). The app will then provide healthier choices for similar products in the 'FoodSwitch' mode. For those with high blood pressure, you may choose the 'SaltSwitch' mode which will provide similar information based on the salt content of a product. The app is powered by a database that includes thousands of Australian food products, but if there is a new product you can even email photos of the product for it to be validated and added to the database.

CATS ON CHANGE



Hello, this is Pushkin, most beautiful of cats, noticing you. I had offered some scraps of advice from my position at the centre of the universe, and a few thousand years of us living with you. Teaching humans is hard work – you don't even clean your fur, though we sit in front of you for hours, demonstrating. And then dogs make you think you are already adorable and perfect. We are the adorable and perfect ones (dogs don't even come last.) Thank you.

Look into my eyes ... right, gotcha. I now offer, between naps and meals, some thoughts on Making Change Happen.

That's easy - Don't. Everything is fine just as it is. Every other day you drag some horrible box into the house, and another object emerges, which is placed somewhere already occupied by one, or even worse by nothing. It then makes noises, blinks lights at you or vibrates. Nasty hot or freezing food or wet clothes may come out. Some of them blow, one even sucks. Sometimes they mess on the carpet. You already have enough of them, and we know where they all are. Until you bring a new one.

Also stop messing with where we come in and out. It's hard work doing all that scent marking, and continually checking the door-opening mechanism (you). One day I found it coated with varnish. I refused to come in for three days, and made sure you counted the hours by scratching about on the roof all night. Remember?

Stop trying to second guess what we want to eat. I know you decoded the Enigma machine in World War Two, but this pattern is beyond your collective IQ. If you get it right we let you know. If you get it wrong we sure as hell let you know.

Stop shrinking. When I was a kitten, you had this huge warm lap. Every year since it has got smaller. Now my bum hangs somewhere over your knees, and I have to dig my claws into your crotch to stay on board. And you expect me to sleep there.

So there is a glimpse of the wisdom we share with you despite everything, especially those who don't have one of us as resident life-coach, enduring your attempts to provide, and patiently repeating the beginner's course 'How To Live 1.0'.

Back to sleep,

pushkin

Most Beautiful of Cats

INTRODUCING GARY TREEVE: MHPE VIC Regional Volunteer Representative



I was called-up for National Service in 1967, but at the time I had just commenced my 4th year of a five year indentured apprenticeship in boilermaker welder and was granted a two year deferment. I thought the Army would forget me after two years, how wrong I was. I started my National Service at the 3rd Training Battalion Singleton NSW, after 10 weeks training I was posted to 1 Company RAASC Ingleburn. I later transferred to RAEME to continue my trade.

I was posted to RMC Workshop Platoon in Canberra. During this posting I met and married my wife Midori. Three weeks later I was in Vietnam 71-72 and I extended my National Service by one year to go to Vietnam. While serving in Vietnam I joined the Regular Army where my career spanned for 20 years and retired as a Warrant Officer Class One (WO1).

During this time I was posted to 3 Base Workshop Battalion, Puckapunyal Workshop Company, 5 Base Workshop Battalion, Aviation Oakey, Army Apprentices School Balcombe, Armament Wing RAEME Training Centre Bandiana and finally to Maintenance Engineering Agency (MEA) in St Kilda Road Melbourne.

After leaving the Army, I worked at Wodonga TAFE for 11 years teaching engineering, welding construction and as an Industry Training Consultant in OH&S. I retired in March 2000 and decided to get involved with volunteer work. The Hume Veterans' Information Centre had just been established in Wodonga, so I began working there. Then in 2001, DVA were looking for Men's Health Peer Education volunteers. Having a training background, I took the opportunity of becoming a MHPE volunteer. This turned out to be a very positive decision. I have had so much personal satisfaction talking to veterans and giving presentations has helped me overcome some of my own problems. It is so rewarding when the wives of veterans thank you for helping to change their husband's lifestyle, and also veterans who say "Thanks mate I needed that talk".

I am currently the President of the Murray Border Association Vietnam Veterans and Chairman of the Army Museum Bandiana Foundation, which keeps me in touch with both serving and retired veterans.

NATIONAL CHANGE UPDATE



A smartphone app, the MyQuitBuddy, and the Butt Out at Work campaign were launched on World No Tobacco Day (31 May 2012) to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking and to assist smokers with their quit attempts. Over 120,000 people have downloaded the app since it launched. The National Tobacco Campaign website (www.quitnow.gov.au) had over two million visits between the campaign launch in 2011 and 31 December 2012.



Since the launch of the Swap It Don't Stop It campaign in March 2011 until 30 June 2012, over 50,000 people downloaded the iPhone app.

SOURCE: Australian National Preventive Health Agency First Year Highlights Report 2011-2012
www.anpha.gov.au

FOR YOUR COMPUTER OR ELECTRONIC DEVICE

GET CONFIDENT GET FOCUSED

WorkOut is an online program for young men to develop skills for life. A joint project between the Inspire Foundation and The Brain and Mind Research Institute, WorkOut enables the young user to tackle their thoughts and attitudes, one activity at a time. Through comprehensive results and recommendations, this program aims to de-stigmatise the idea of getting help and lay the foundations of good mental health.

www.workoutapp.com.au/

MOVING FORWARD

The Moving Forward website is designed to be especially helpful for veterans, military service members and their families. The website is a free, on-line educational and life coaching program that assists users in developing problem solving skills to help handle life's challenges. Moving Forward teaches skills that can be useful to anyone with stressful problems.

www.startmovingforward.org/

N.B. Moving Forward is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Australian equivalent of Moving Forward is www.wellbeingtoolbox.net.au

ABOUTFACE

AboutFace is an online video gallery dedicated to veterans talking about living with PTSD and how treatment turned around their lives. Meet men and women who speak candidly about PTSD symptoms, stigma and the effects of PTSD on family and friends.

AboutFace is for people who think they might have PTSD and want to explore what treatment is like. It's also for family members who don't know what to do as they watch their loved ones struggle to recover from trauma.

www.ptsd.va.gov/apps/AboutFace/

N.B. AboutFace is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. Refer to Understanding changes in veterans (page 6) for information on DVA's online videos regarding mental health or go to www.youtube.com/DVAAus

FOR THE BOOKSHELF OR EREADER

Older men's business : valuing relationships, living with change
by Jack Zinn.

Older men present valuable insights into their lives, in areas such as work, retirement, family relationships, deteriorating health, sexuality, spirituality, widowerhood, loneliness and depression.

The Great Life Redesign: Change How You Work, Live How You Dream and Make it Happen Today
by Caroline Cameron

'The Great Life Redesign' by Caroline Cameron helps you identify how the 21st century living is affecting you and offers suggestions on how you can make changes to improve your life. Regardless of how small or large the changes you wish to make are, the author shows you how to define what it exactly is you want to change, design a plan to make it happen, put a budget in place and finally, make that change happen. Featuring practical, easy-to-apply techniques, exercises, tools and tips, plus more than 30 inspirational case studies, you'll soon be on your way to a great life.

Sourced by Jo Wagner, DVA Librarian.

NATIONAL ROUND-UP



IMAGE ABOVE: MHPE Funky Drill

IMAGE LEFT MHPE Volunteer Representatives. Back row L-R: Marsat Ketchell (National Indigenous), Kevin Moss (South QLD), Malcolm 'Tiny' Small (WA), Mark Hills (NSW & ACT), Peter Huber (NSW & ACT) and Laurie Harrison (TAS). Front Row L-R Darryel Binns (NT), John Macartney (North QLD), Kathy Behrendt (SA), Gary Treeve (VIC).



MEN'S HEALTH PEER EDUCATION COULD YOU BE A VOLUNTEER?

The Men's Health Peer Education (MHPE) program held its annual workshop in Adelaide from 21-23 November 2012. MHPE Volunteer Representatives and DVA MHPE Coordinators from every state and territory showcased health promoting activities held throughout the year and discussed plans for the future.

The theme of the Workshop was Physical Activity to align with the Veterans' Health Week (VHW) 2013 theme. Several of our guest speakers provided information and ideas regarding how MHPE could increase its support of and involvement in VHW. We were also fortunate to have presentations from the Repatriation Commissioner, MAJGEN Mark Kelly, AO, DSC and Dr Graeme Killer, AO, DVA's Principal Medical Adviser.

The Australia vs. South Africa cricket test at the Adelaide oval only proved a minor distraction and thankfully we were all staying at a different hotel. However, to support the theme of Physical Activity, we participated in a range of exercises, including a walk – detouring away from Adelaide oval – which ended at the Torrens Parade Ground and included the first presentation of the MHPE 'Funky' Drill.

*Staying healthy is the aim
From junk food we should refrain
Exercise is good for you
Cycling, swimming, walking too*

The following is a summary of key outcomes from the Workshop:

- MHPE will be developing a volunteer-in-training and mentor scheme to assist individuals who are waiting to attend training.
- A MHPE Health Information Day will be developed for those interested in learning more about their health and the MHPE volunteer program.
- The MHPE volunteer training program which was reviewed in 2012 will be rolled out from March 2013

If you are interested in becoming a MHPE volunteer and would like to learn more about the program:

- visit our website at www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm; or
- phone 133 243 (metro) or 1800 555 254 (regional Australia) and ask to speak to the MHPE Coordinator for your State or Territory.

KEEPING YOUR MIND ACTIVE ANSWERS

HINK PINKS

1. Go Doe
2. Play Day
3. Half Laugh
4. Rad Dad
5. Claw Flaw
6. Teal Eel
7. Plain Train
8. Male Snail
9. Flat Hat
10. Gray Day

WORD CHANGE

Tree	Cape	Fire
Free	Cope	Dire
Flee	Core	Dare
Fled	More	Dark
		Park

MATHS CHALLENGE

3	+	2	-	4	1
-		+		+	
5	x	7	-	6	29
-		x		-	
8	x	1	-	9	-1
-10		9		1	

'STAGES OF CHANGE' CHECK-SHEET FOR EXERCISE BEHAVIOUR

The 'Stages of Change' model has been in use by the Men's Health Peer Education program, and is presented here in Check-sheet form overleaf for your use as a tear-out insert from the magazine. It gives the Stages of Change and Helpful Strategies for exercise behaviour. On it you can mark the Stage you are at in the change process, and the strategies you are trying.

Theories of behaviour change explain why some individuals find it difficult to make changes, or even to acknowledge valid reasons to make a change. Anyone who has ever made and broken a New Year's Resolution can appreciate the difficulty. Change is rarely a simple process, and usually involves a significant commitment of time, effort and emotion.

The Stages of Change model developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (in Pitts and Phillips 1999) can be applied to a variety of behaviours, including those that affect health. Each person progresses through the stages at their own rate, and will decide when it is time to move on – stable, long term change cannot be forced by someone else.



THE STAGES

For exercise behaviours, the Stages of Change of the model suggested are:

PRECONTEMPLATION: not seriously considering the need for regular exercise

CONTEMPLATION: seriously considering exercise

PREPARATION: beginning to plan for change, say during the next month

ACTION: actually exercising over 0-6 months

MAINTENANCE: attending regularly after 6 months.

WHAT IF I RELAPSE?

It is common for a person looking to make lifestyle changes to 'fall off the wagon', that is, to relapse to their old habit. Relapse can occur with exercise, cigarettes, diets and many other lifestyle choices. We should reward the efforts made and encourage renewed change. In other instances people may progress through one or more stages, or skip a stage, but go no further.

THERE ARE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR RELAPSES ALSO:

- Remind yourself that change is a process
- Analyse how the 'relapse' happened and use it as an opportunity to learn how to cope differently
- Identify the triggers that lead to relapse
- Recognise the barriers to success and take steps to overcome these obstacles
- Develop stronger coping strategies.

Remember, behaviour change does not happen in one step, rather people tend to progress through different stages in their own time on their way to successful change.

"It's never too late to change your lifestyle"

STAGES OF CHANGE MODEL FOR EXERCISE	I'M AT THIS STAGE	HELPFUL STRATEGIES	I'M DOING THIS
Pre-contemplation: a period during which I am not seriously considering the need for regular exercise: “No problems, I’m fine as I am”.		Rethinking my behaviour	
		Engaging in self-exploration, not action	
		Engaging in self-analysis and introspection	
		Considering the risks of my current behaviour	
Contemplation: a period during which I am seriously considering exercise: “I can’t do what I used to; I need to get fitter”. The shift from pre-contemplation to contemplation sometimes results from a ‘trigger’ event or crisis.		Listing the reasons why I should change and the consequences of not changing	
		Identifying barriers to change and consider possible solutions for one barrier at a time	
		Considering the things (people, programs, behaviours) that have helped me make changes in the past	
Preparation: a period during which I begin to plan for change, say during the next month: “That new gym has opened up nearby; I’ll buy myself a track suit”.		Writing down my goals and preparing a plan of action	
		Writing a list of motivating statements e.g. “It’s never too late to change”	
		Problem-solving potential obstacles	
		Prioritising the steps I have to do to change	
		Setting a change date	
Action: a period from 0-6 months during which I am actually exercising: “Three times a week I’m in the gym – I’m feeling good”.		Rewarding my small successes	
		Seeking out social support	
		Reviewing my goals realistically	
		Viewing problems as helpful information	
Maintenance: a period beginning 6 months after the start of the exercise program: “I’m attending regularly, and rarely miss a session”.		Developing coping strategies to deal with temptation	
		Developing a plan for follow-up support	
		Maintaining a weekly/monthly achievement diary	
		Considering which strategies have been helpful and what situations problematic	

Men’s Health Peer Education (MHPE) program aims to raise the veteran community’s awareness of men’s health issues and encourages men to manage their own health and wellbeing. The program trains volunteers from all age groups to provide health information to members of the veteran community.

MHPE volunteers share this information via many channels, for example, giving a talk on a health issue at a local community group, holding a stand at a community expo or

speaking person-to-person with a veteran, such as a friend at a barbeque. The MHPE program is open to any member, male or female, of the veteran, ex-service, or general community, who is able to volunteer their time and has a genuine interest in helping veterans to learn about healthy lifestyle choices.

For information about the MHPE program, visit our website www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm or contact the relevant DVA MHPE Coordinator below:

NAME	LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Nikki Wood	Queensland	07 5630 0203	MHPEQLD@dva.gov.au
Jumae Atkinson	Western Australia	08 9366 8355	Jumae.Atkinson@dva.gov.au
Kerry Jay	Victoria	03 9284 6199	MHPEVIC@dva.gov.au
VAN Manager	Northern Territory	133 254 or 1800 555 254	MHPENT@dva.gov.au
Margie Gutteridge	South Australia	08 8290 0375	MHPESA@dva.gov.au
David Stevens	Tasmania	03 6221 6711	MHPETAS@dva.gov.au
Naomi Blundell	NSW and ACT	02 9213 7661	MHPENSW@dva.gov.au





Australian Government

Department of Veterans’ Affairs

Men’s Health Peer Education

Produced by
Editor
National Coordinator, Men’s Health Peer Education
The Department of Veterans’ Affairs

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www.dva.gov.au/mhpe.htm

Feedback, Articles and Ideas
Email the editor: **menshealth@dva.gov.au**

Mail your letter to:
Editor
Men’s Health Peer Education Magazine
c/- Department of Veterans’ Affairs
GPO Box 9998
Sydney NSW 2001

Next issue due out in July 2013
THEME: Physical Activity

Deadline for articles or ideas for the next issue is 7 June

If you’d like to share your story with our readers or have an idea for an article, we’d like to hear from you. You can email the Editor at menshealth@dva.gov.au or call 1800 555 254 (regional) or 133 254 (metro) and ask for the MHPE National Coordinator.

If you would like to order more copies of the magazine – it’s easy!
Download an order form from our website or email the Editor.

Your local contact is:

P02413