

December 2014

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Welcome Dr Alexander Lim

We are pleased to announce that consultant psychiatrist, Dr Alexander Lim joined us here at Think Psychology Solutions in October 2014.

Dr Lim compliments our existing psychiatric care provided by Dr Meredith Whiting and will continue working closely with our team of psychologists and clinical psychologists, ensuring the best possible mental health care.

Dr Lim has considerable experience and expertise working with the full spectrum of mental health disorders presenting across the lifespan. Dr Lim has a subspecialisation in **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry** and a particular interest in early life experiences and how relational ecologies shape an individual.

Dr Lim has been working in public mental health, sharing his time between the CAMHS and Adult Community teams here in Canberra.

Thought Bubble

Happy holidays from our practice

All at Think Psychology would like to wish our referrers, clients and those we've worked with through the year a very Merry Christmas and a Happy 2015.

It has been terrific working with you all and we very much look forward to continue these working relationships in the New Year.

Holiday Period Opening Hours

Think Psychology Solutions will close for the Christmas break at around lunchtime on December 24 (and we won't be doing that much work in the morning either!)

We will re-open on Monday January 5, 2015 ready for the New Year.

SELF-HARM IN YOUNG PEOPLE By Melissa Nihill -Psychologist

What is self-harm?

Self-harm refers to deliberately hurting or injuring one's body. The most common method of self-harm in young people is deliberate cutting; though other methods include burning or punching the body, and picking or scratching skin.

Why do young people self-harm?

Self-harm is particularly high amongst young people who often feel overwhelmed or find it difficult to cope with stress and strong emotions. Young people report a number of reasons as to why they self-harm, including coping with feelings of numbness, pain, distress, anxiety, depression, or negative thoughts and memories. Others use self-harm as a means of punishment, due to feelings of shame or guilt.

Some young people are more likely to self-harm than others, including those with a history of emotional, physical or sexual abuse, difficulties in their family environment, or mental illness.

Over time, young people can use self-harm as a long-term solution to alleviate distress. While self-harm can provide very short-term relief or a temporary solution to a problem, the injuries can be incredibly detrimental to the young person's physical and mental health. In most circumstances, self-harm is not a suicide attempt; however, those who do self-harm are at a higher risk of accidental suicide due to the extent of injuries or unforeseen damages that can occur as a result.

In addition, young people who self-harm are more likely to think about suicide and attempt suicide at some stage.

What can GPs do to help?

For most young people, their GP is their first point of contact to discuss self-harm. It is important to remember that, for many young people, self-harm is associated with shame and embarrassment, and has been kept a secret for some time. Therefore, it is important for GP's to respond in an empathic and caring manner by normalising the young person's feelings and experience, instilling a sense of hope, and building on any adaptive coping behaviours (such as talking about the problem). During this time, it is also important to assess the young person's level of risk, including whether they are thinking about suicide, and if so, whether they have a plan in place, as well as assessing the extent of the young person's injuries and providing medical attention if needed.

If a GP believes that the young person is at immediate risk of harm, they can contact the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (6205 1971) or the Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (1800 629 354).

When to refer and what can Psychologists do to help?

It is crucial that young people who are self-harming are referred to a Psychologist or other mental health professional with experience in working with young people and self-harm. Psychologists can assist young people in understanding why they self-harm, while finding other ways of coping with distress and painful emotions, thoughts or memories.

Useful Contacts

Lifeline – 13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Emergency services for urgent assistance – 000

Psychologist	Clinical Psych	Children (Under 12)	Adolescent (12-18)	Adult	Older Persons	Specialities/Interests/Experience
Sean Dicks	✓		✓	✓		Relationship counselling, depression, anxiety, chronic physical health issues
Vanessa Hamilton	✓	✓	✓	✓		Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, parenting issues and stress.
Terese Hutchison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Children (primary school age and under), adolescents, anxiety in kids, older persons
Jason McCrae	✓		✓ (males)	✓	✓	Anxiety and adjustment disorders, men, Bipolar Disorder, Gambling, relationships.
Brigid Ryan	✓		✓	✓		Perinatal mental health, adolescents, stress, and anxiety related disorders, depression.
Lisa Knipe			✓ (over 15)	✓		Eating disorders (esp. binge eating), obesity and weight issues, perinatal mental health, anxiety, stress and depression.
Daniel Troy	✓	✓	✓	✓		Aspergers Disorder, anxiety, depression, working with children and families
Robin Wood	✓		✓	✓	✓	Older persons, clients with background in defence or military, workplace issues
Miranda Morrissey			✓	✓		Depression, anxiety, stress, eating disorders, workplace issues (including comcare)
Melissa Nihill		✓	✓	✓		Adolescents, anxiety, body image issues, depression.
Elizabeth Muldoon		✓	✓	✓		Adolescents, children, anxiety, depression, emotional eating, stress and coping.

Welcome Liz Muldoon!

Exciting times at Think Psychology Solutions with the addition of Psychologist Liz Muldoon.

Liz actually started at Think in September as a Locum, replacing Terese Hutchison who has been on extended leave, however we liked her so much we've convinced her to stay!

She joins us from previous roles at the Queanbeyan Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and the adult Mental Health service.

Like all Think Psychologists Liz works across age ranges and general clinical psychology issues but with her CAMHS background is comfortable working with children and adolescents (and their families).

Liz works 4 days per week (currently Monday to Wednesday and Friday) and has good availability.

More details on Liz's areas of expertise and background can be found on our *About* page on our website www.thinkps.com.au



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