

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September**  
**Stream E**  
**11.30am - 12.50pm**

### **Experiential therapy - Horses building connections and driving change**

Client-centred; solution-oriented; evidence-driven

Renée Keenan, Director, Changing Horses Ltd

The Eagala (Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association) Model of Equine Assisted Therapy is highly effective because it embraces the science that humans learn best by doing. This model is purpose built for mental health intervention. It prescribes a hands-on approach where clients are provided with a safe space to project and analyse their situations, make connections, and find their own solutions. While embodied, these solutions are also cognitively understood which enables clients to gain deeper, more profound and sustained therapeutic shifts. The Eagala Model applies a team approach which includes a licensed, credentialed mental health professional, an experienced Equine Specialist, and horses, working together with the client at all times. During the work, the horses (not the Therapists) remain front and centre, deliberately unhindered, never ridden, at liberty to freely interact with the client as they wish. This creates a safe space for clients, with the support of the professional facilitators, to gain insight into themselves, their lives, behaviours, relationships and life situations. One of the many outstanding features of this intervention is the level of client uptake and its effectiveness in cases, where traditional 'talk' or 'office based' therapies have failed. This presentation describes the model and demonstrates the implementation, efficacy and wide application through the use of anecdotes and narratives.

Presenter biography

Renée Keenan BA AODS; EAGALA Advanced Practitioner; DAPAANZ member since 2000 has been providing Equine Assisted Therapy to a variety of clients, in the Lower North Island since 2007, with some phenomenological outcomes.

### **The stigma of dependence**

Akinihi Dawson

I'm a proud Ngāpuhi woman a former methadone addict who had the resilience to get clean and work as a clinician for an Opiate Substitution Treatment service, before certain life circumstances led me to register back on OST for treatment. Throughout this 45 year journey where I've occupied spaces on both sides of the fence (as both consumer and clinician) one thing has remained unchanged, a culture of discrimination that exists amongst the non opiate addicted OST workforce. Whether a current user, or a former user who'd turned her life around and was trying to help others, every negative assumption of my character and every subtle put down crushed me and reinforced the stigma of dependence on a daily basis. That was until I was allocated a strong wāhine case worker who really saw the real me and connected with my being.

Presenter biography

Akinihi is a Ngāpuhi woman whose lived experience provides practitioners an incredibly powerful insight into what works and what doesn't, particularly for OST clients. She is passionate that the

voice of the OST consumer be heard and respected. Akinihi has navigated addiction, treatment, recovery, work as an addiction practitioner, relapse and getting back on the recovery horse over a 45 year period. She clearly articulates what has worked for her with the essence of her message being the power of meaningful connection in the treatment client relationship.

## **The efficacy of yoga with addictions: A systematic review of evidence**

Alexander El Amanni,

Kahui Tu Kaha, Consumer Leader, University of Auckland, Master of Health Practice student

**Issue/Background:** In New Zealand, addiction is a common mental disorder and a population health issue that causes significant social and treatment costs. Relapse rates post addiction treatment are considered high. Yoga has been suggested as a complementary therapy with addiction treatment to prevent relapse. Yoga can help to reduce depression and anxiety by reducing stress hormones and increasing GABA levels.

**Method:** The study design is a systematic review of literature. Data from ( $n=10$ ) studies with a total of ( $N=671$ ) research participants were used in the review.

**Aim:** To present results of studies in a data table and a thematic analysis of outcome measures areas of functioning that improved.

**Results:** Seven out of the ten studies had statistically significant results ( $p<0.05$ ) for various outcome measures. The themes of the areas of functioning that improved were *depression, urges/cravings, anxiety* and *Quality of Life*.

**Conclusion:** Yogic interventions may be recommended to substance use disorder patients as a complementary therapy to improve their level of functioning in certain areas. More longitudinal randomised controlled trials are needed to test the relapse prevention efficacy. Conclusions are limited by a high risk of bias due to no patient blinding and confounding variables due to different outcome measures.

Keywords: Yoga, addiction, substance use disorder, complementary therapy, alternative intervention

### Presenter biography

Alexander graduated in 2017 with a Bachelor of Addiction Studies from Wellington Institute of Technology, and he is a current postgraduate student at the University of Auckland, studying a Master of Health Practice - Addiction Studies specialisation. He worked as an Addiction Caseworker for The Salvation Army and he has Provisional Registration with DAPAANZ. He is currently working as a Consumer Leader for Kahui Tu Kaha. He has lived experience of addiction and is a member of the Narcotics Anonymous fellowship.

## **Cultivating connection with mindfulness. One breath at a time**

Kate Brandram-Adams, Addiction Nurse; Christchurch City Mission. Mindfulness teacher:  
Mindfulness North Canterbury

This presentation will provide an overview of how an addiction nurse and mindfulness teacher uses mindfulness practices to build and cultivate connection in addiction treatment. It will include a combination of experiential mindfulness practice and the theory and science on how it builds connection.

The exploration will be based on disconnection and lack of connection being part of the etiology and maintenance of addictions. The presentation will explore the links between science based, secular mindfulness practices, creation of connection and the healing of addictions. Connection will be explored in the broadest terms of our human experience; including connection with self, others, spirit, nature, body and breath. Connection with our own wisdom and wholeness, as part of holistic addiction recovery.

The aim of this presentation is to share knowledge, stimulate curiosity in mindfulness as part of addiction treatment and offer an experience of the connecting power of mindfulness.

### Presenter biography

Kate is a registered mental health nurse and certified addictions nurse working in the addiction field for 18 years. She currently runs the North Canterbury adult outpatient AOD service for the Christchurch City Mission.

Kate is also a trained and registered mindfulness teacher. Mindfulness is integral to her life and wellbeing. Kate teaches mindfulness in her community, as part of addiction treatment and to health professionals and organizations. As a trained Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) teacher she hopes to bring the addiction specific course Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention into mainstream addiction treatment.