

## Highlights

One Year Anniversary of Riverton opening!

New Website

Online Bookings Goes Live



## Happy Birthday Riverton!

Greetings all, and welcome to this edition of the Healthfocus Newsletter.

The Easter break is over and the Term 1 school holidays mark the completion of the first stanza of 2018 and time for a quick breath before we dive back into the next part of the year, which is often the busiest in work and business.

At Healthfocus, we are celebrating one year of operations at Riverton,

having opened the doors to clients in the neighbourhood in April 2017.

Thank you to all our clients and referrers for welcoming us to the area and we look forward to continuing to be of service in 2018 and beyond!

In this newsletter we have a number of exciting announcements, including the revamped Website, the launch of Online Bookings, Monique now available for



appointments at Riverton, and welcoming Yaw Yung, a recent psychology graduate, who is undertaking an internship with Healthfocus.

Yong has also written an article about de-cluttering.

Welcome to Autumn and best wishes from the Healthfocus team!

## Contents

New Website	1
Online Bookings	2
Monique @ Riverton	2
Yeow Yong - Intern	2
De-cluttering	3

## Website upgrade

Our "back room" tech team has been working hard behind the scenes to update and refresh the Healthfocus Website.

The previous version of the Website used a platform that became unsupported in the past 2 years and was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, especially for compatibility with newer mobile and tablet devices.

The upgrade to a new platform has now been completed. This makes it easier for us to keep the content up to date and integrates with the Online Booking System (see related news piece).

Content from the previous Website has been migrated and refreshed along the way.



We would love to hear feedback about the revamped Website that lets us know if it is working well, if there is any content that we may have missed in the upgrade, and if there are things that you think could be added to or changed.

We are especially interested to know if the Website is working well on your phone and tablets, Apple, Android and any others.

*"Yaw Yung is currently undertaking an internship with Healthfocus to get some valuable work experience...."*



## Monique now at Riverton

We are pleased to announce that Monique Armstrong-Burgin is now available for appointments at our Riverton clinic.

Monique has worked as a Clinical Psychologist for the many years in both the public and private sectors.

She works across all age ranges, from young children to adults, including children and adolescents with disabilities.

She is experienced with working with issues related to anxiety and mood disorders, attachment and relationship challenges, parenting issues as well as behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Monique enjoys working alongside others, helping people to feel empowered through understanding their options and making positive changes in their life.



## Psychology Intern – Mr Yaw Yung

Mr Yaw Yung Wong is a recent Bachelor of Psychology graduate from a local university.

Our Clinical Director is Dr Yong Lee, and we have a Clinical Psychologist, Dr Yeow Tan, so it is quite a coincidence that our psychology intern's name is pronounced "Yeow Yong"!

The path to becoming a Clinical Psychologist is a long one, taking at least 8 years under current Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Authority regulations.

It usually is 4 years of undergraduate study, followed by 2 or more years of postgraduate studies and then up to 2 years of supervised practice.

Yaw Yung is currently undertaking an internship with Healthfocus to get some valuable work experience and exposure to the field of Clinical Psychology as he prepares to decide which path of further training he would like to pursue in upcoming years.

## Launch of Online Bookings

Thank you to all our clients who volunteered to trial and test the online appointment booking system in recent months.

Feedback we received was very helpful and the system has been updated to incorporate suggestions.

Online Booking is now live and available from a link on the Website.

All systems go!



## De-cluttering

**"One day I will need it!"**

Does this sound familiar?

Whether living alone or with a big family, we all accumulate things over time. Most of us go through life, gathering "stuff"... Clothes that we wore in our childhood, with the thought that they may be passed down to children, or mementos from special occasions that bring back memories of events in our lives.

We often cannot let go of our belongings for many reasons, for example, fear of wastage, guilt for wasting money, not wanting to dismiss the kind gestures of other people's gifts, sentimental value, thinking that the item may still be useful, and regret that we may not be able to find its like anywhere in the future.

Before we know it, things "pile up", we can get overwhelmed by all the "stuff" that has been amassed, and it can take a long time to sort through.

Some of us may find it difficult to dispose of things, while others find themselves continually buying unnecessary things, and yet others have difficulties with keeping things organised.

When it gets to the stage that clutter is affecting any aspect of your life, like not wanting to go home, preventing guests from visiting, or feeling ashamed when others do visit, then it is helpful to better understand the problem, get help and address the clutter.



From a scientific perspective, Hoarding has been defined in the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (v5) (DSM-5) as a persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value, where the challenges with parting with possessions results in accumulation of possessions that congest and clutter active living areas and substantially compromises intended use of the area (APA, 2013)

Hoarding is not rare, with approximately 2-6% of adults and adolescents impacted. A summary by Tolin, Frost, Steketee and Muroff (2015) found that

CBT is a promising treatment for hoarding, although research into other treatments is still warranted. They concluded that the best improvements were for treatments that targeted reducing difficulty in discarding possessions, followed by techniques for reducing clutter and limiting acquiring unnecessary possessions.

When one has made the call that there is an issue with clutter, and that de-cluttering is on the cards, we have acknowledged that a change is required.

To help with attaining any change, it is important to understand the reasons

why we want to change.

Motivations will differ from person to person. For some of us, the positives of de-cluttering could be clear space to undertake new projects with a fresher mind, while for others it will be being able to find things more easily, and not tripping over things that have been left around, while for many it may mean being able to "get on with life", including entertaining visitors again.

All reasons for change set a path towards better emotional and mental health.



## Psychologists can help!

Barriers to de-cluttering often include a busy work schedule, lack of support, unhelpful thinking, avoidance of the problem, and feeling overwhelmed.

This is when a psychologist can help to assist an individual to examine and challenge thinking that is maintaining behaviours that lead to and maintain clutter.

This could include beliefs about possessions, like the evaluation of the beauty, value or utility of an item, linking memories to items, beliefs about wastage, fear of loss (e.g. of information), the idea that holding on to items is a form of comfort or control, or conversely that de-cluttering is too difficult because the accumulation is "out of control".



## Behavioural change

A psychologist may also help explore de-cluttering in context with an individual's present and historical life stressors, which may include past trauma, and current anxiety or depression, which may also need attention.

Other research found that individuals with hoarding may have difficulties with making decisions, or initiating or completing tasks (Tolins, et al, 2012).

The behavioural aspects of CBT that a psychologist may introduce include setting goals, for example, "host my birthday party at home", working with the individual to set a time schedule for de-cluttering, arranging support from family or friends, formulating a graduated step-by-step hierarchy of de-cluttering jobs starting usually with easier activities and then working up to more challenging tasks, and defining spaces or categories for tidying.

## References

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## Approaches to de-cluttering

There is no single technique that works for everyone.

For example, this decision guide is a way to "draw the line" between keeping and disposing an item:

- a) I am definitely going to keep this item
- b) I am definitely going to dispose of this item:
  - i. Sell
  - ii. Donate
  - iii. Dispose
  - iv. Recycle
- c) If I am not sure, ask these questions:
  - i. Do I really need this?
  - ii. How often have I used this?
  - iii. Could I get something like this again if I need it?

For many of us, starting small, one area or section at a time is easier, while for others, focusing on a particular category (e.g. clothes) through the entire home works better.

## Useful tips

In a previous newsletter, I wrote an information piece about procrastination. Some of the tips from there can also be applied to de-cluttering.

It is very important to build momentum in tidying.

Garage sales, community / flea markets or other charity or fundraising events can be opportunities to tidy, and have the benefit of giving us the feeling that the items have been put to good use, or have found another caring owner.

Internet marketplaces also provide low cost (often free) way of seeing if others are interested in unused items.

Taking a leaf from many of the international libraries, many paper based assets (photos, documents) can be digitised and converted into electronic form, which are more enduring and can be shared with others more easily.

If there is sentimental value attached to photos or other collections, a good tip is to keep a favourite or two and digitise the rest.

It can be easier to do a little at a time every day or every week, but it can become a bit of a chore, so holding a "tidy festival" or a "Spring Cleaning" every now and then may be better, say if there is a "verge collection" or home party coming up.

Just getting started can be the most difficult thing, and we tend to procrastinate as things pile up more and more. Sometimes just finding "one big thing" to clear out can get the momentum going, or alternatively disposing of a few smaller items that are easier to part with.



*"... holding a 'tidy festival' or 'Spring Cleaning' every now and then may be better..."*

If the challenge is because of continually acquiring possessions, then a goal can be useful, like "I will not buy any new clothes until the wardrobe has been cleared and tidied".

Remember that tidying and de-cluttering is not purely a physical exercise. The act of tidying can also be like a meditation and promote calm and clearer thinking.



*Tidying can be a way to clear the mind, like a form of meditation.*

## De-cluttering- help is available

But don't go overboard! Organisation does not have to be perfect, and a home cannot practically be perfectly "spick and span" all of the time.

An good book on this topic is the New York Times #1 best-seller "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing" by Marie Kondo. The book is insightful, inspired by principles found in feng shui and meditation.

Some of the information and tips in this guide may be just the trick to get you started on de-cluttering, but if you feel overwhelmed, stuck, stressed, depressed or distressed about tidying, then professional help from a psychologist may be part of the solution.

At Healthfocus, we have Clinical Psychologists who will be able to assist you to better understand the issue and work with you to implement strategies to reduce clutter.

We are here and ready to help.

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## About Us

Healthfocus has been serving residents in Armadale, Kelmscott, Roleystone and surrounding areas since 2004, and today continues to operate a privately owned, independent practice close to Armadale City Centre, the hub of a vibrant and growing region. In 2017, we expanded and opened a Riverton practice next to Stockland Shopping Centre serving Riverton, Willetton, Parkwood, Shelley, Lynwood and neighbouring suburbs.

We provide treatment to assist our clients to overcome a wide range of mental health conditions. Our approach to psychological treatment is tailored to suit the individuals' goals, working with clients to develop sustainable coping mechanisms and strategies to empower clients to successfully achieve their desired outcomes.

- Medicare "Better Access to Mental Health" (with referral from Doctor)
- Private Health Insurance
- Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA)
- Workers Compensation (State and Commonwealth)
- Motor Vehicle Claims (MVA/ICWA)
- Total and Permanent Disability, Income Protection Insurance
- Criminal Compensation
- Department of Communities – Child Protection and Family Support
- Other Medicolegal
- Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) –Early Intervention Service

### Our services

- Adults, adolescents and children
- Mood and anxiety disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Trauma reaction, adjustment and post traumatic stress
- Grief and loss
- Chronic pain management
- Sleep disturbance
- Women's health, including ante/post-natal issues
- Family and relationship counseling
- Drug, alcohol and smoking
- Self harm
- Weight loss, eating disorders
- Sexual issues including, gender change, abuse and trauma
- School refusal
- Positive parenting

**We're on the Web!**

[www.healthfocuspsychology.com.au](http://www.healthfocuspsychology.com.au)