



Edition 3, July 2014

WRISC News

Art & DRUMBEAT Programs for Children

Group work can provide a safe, supportive space where children can express some of their feelings and experiences at the same time as having fun and making friends. During our group programs we use lots of art, music and games to create a space that feels safe, relaxed and fun.

For children from families who have experienced a high degree of parental conflict, family violence or homelessness there is often lots of confusion, grief, and isolation. There is also often little time for fun and 'time out' due to the difficulties of families having very little money, sorting out contact arrangements, accommodation, changing schools and so on.

We know that some children who have experienced family violence have trouble expressing their feelings. After this type of trauma children may feel 'on edge' or have mood swings that change quickly. Some children may feel angry, anxious or unable to control their feelings. These are normal reactions to frightening and confusing events. Art and music helps children to express some of these feelings without having to use words. It can also help children to calm down and get their bodies back to a relaxed state.

The use of creative arts methods, games and activities offers limitless potential in working non-verbally through issues that are often too hard to express verbally. By exploring issues in a non-threatening way

children's interactions with themselves and others can begin to be restored and strengthened. Most of all groups can be a positive way for children to gain support after living in a difficult situation.

Our Children's Art Therapy Group is for children 9-12

years who have experienced high conflict separation, homelessness and/or family violence. The group runs after school on Tuesday afternoons 3:30 to 5pm starting 15th July.



Our DRUMBEAT Program is

a relationship program that includes hand drumming and discussion. It promotes connection with others and reduces tension, anxiety and stress. The term 3 group is for children 7-9 years. The group runs after school on Wednesday afternoon 4pm to 4:45pm starting 16th July.



If you would like to find out more about these groups Contact Sally, Ruth or Jo at WRISC.



Facts about Family Violence for Women with Disabilities

- Women with disabilities often live and work in situations which make them targets of abuse and violence.
- Women with disabilities experience specific forms of violence that are often invisible to others.
- There are specific human rights conventions that require family violence services to be inclusive and accessible to all clients, including women with disabilities.

It is with sadness and excitement that I write my last piece for the WRISC newsletter.

My family and I head overseas for extended travel in just a couple of months. We first spend some time in Samoa where my son's father and family live before we fly to Europe to housesit, travel and perhaps eventually base ourselves in the UK for a time. This is an exciting new adventure for us as a family and at the same time I can hardly believe that I finish up at WRISC at the end of this week. I have had a long involvement with WRISC over many, many years. First as a locum children's work for a few months back in 1996 and then as a member of the Collective and later Board of Governance. The last four years I have worked as Executive Officer and I feel very privileged to have had this opportunity.

Thinking back over the last four years in particular and what the organisation has achieved in that time is simply incredible. We have faced and continue to face funding uncertainty, demand for our services that often outstrips our capacity, embarked on new projects particularly in the primary prevention space, continued to develop and improve our practice and provide a range of needed service options for women and children experiencing family violence. We have established a strong voice in the community through opportunities in the media, holding events, presenting at various community clubs, presenting at national conferences and representing the needs of women and children as well as services on various networks and government bodies. The staff at WRISC work incredibly hard, they are dedicated and passionate about stopping violence against women and children and ensuring they have access to much needed help and services. They are strong advocates for our clients and for the sector.

There have been so many highlights in my time as Executive Officer I can't mention them all. Some of these are relocating to a new building and space that is welcoming and valuing of our clients, staff and volunteers; establishing our volunteer program; achieving accreditation with flying colours a second time around; redevelopment and branding of our website and brochures; hosting the film *I am a Girl*; embarking on new partnerships to address violence before it occurs such as Act @ Work with Women's Health Grampians, CAFS and the City of Ballarat; developed and implemented our first Reconciliation Action Plan; increasing our children's counselling services, provided more children's groups and established the Women for Safety and Justice Group. There are many, many more.

My time at WRISC has been filled with many challenges and learning. I feel I have had the opportunity to grow, to develop new skills, met and worked with amazing talented and inspiring women, made new friends and deepened my friendship with many wonderful people.

In some ways I feel I am leaving just when I am getting started. I will take many fond memories with me, particularly memories of the many inspiring and incredibly strong women and children we work for. They will continue to inspire me for the rest of my life. I hope I do them proud as a result of having worked for and learnt from them.

I would like to thank our Board (and past Board members) of amazing and dedicated women who in their own time work incredibly hard to ensure WRISC is a leading light in our sector and community for *safety, equality and opportunity for all people*. I thank them for their guidance and support and have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to have worked with them. I wish them all the best for the future and challenges ahead.



I would also like to thank the equally incredible women who work and volunteer at WRISC. I have so enjoyed getting to know you and to have worked with you.

WRISC is a fabulous organisation that does incredible work. Thank you to all our members, supporters, partners and donors without you we wouldn't be able to achieve as much as we do. Together we really do make a difference.

Farewell for now.

Jacinta Wainwright



Women's Stories for Safety & Justice

Social Media is well recognised as an important social marketing tool for preventing violence against women. The Women's Stories for Safety and Justice project will provide an opportunity for women who have experienced violence to share their stories to the larger community as well as provide them with a platform to voice their experiences and to help others.

This project will share women's stories to shine a light on the nature and dynamics of violence, that is, the deliberate nature of violence, the many ways victims of violence resist and the importance of social responses to stop violence. Community attitudes play a significant role in sustaining and sanctioning violence. This project will use multimedia to capture women's stories and publish them on a social media platform to raise awareness and dispel many of the myths and misconceptions about men's violence against women in our community.

Our members of the Women for Safety and Justice group are key partners in this project. Earlier this year group members expressed an interest in helping other women experiencing family violence. They sought to share their stories and some have already taken up the opportunity to be interviewed by ABC radio for a story aired on Radio National a couple of months ago.

We hope to get this project off the ground in the next few months with the aid of grants and philanthropic donations. To do this we need to raise \$15,000 to get started.

If you would like to support this project through monetary or other in-kind donations please contact Anita Koelle at WRISC.

WRISC Women for Safety and Justice group was formed in 2013.

The purpose of this group is to provide a safe place for women who are or have been victims of violence to share their experiences and insight, with a particular focus on elucidating the deliberate nature of violence, acknowledging and honouring women's resistance and considering the social responses experienced by women. Since the group was formed up to 10 women meet on a weekly basis to share their stories, inspire and support each other.

If you would like to find out more about this group please contact Kristen Sheridan at WRISC.

"In our experience, people always resist violence and abuse in some way. They will stand up against, not comply with, and try to stop or prevent violence, disrespect or oppression."

(Honouring Resistance Booklet, 2012)

Some of the ways women have identified they have resisted violence

- ◇ **Mentally blocking it out**
- ◇ **Go somewhere else mentally**
- ◇ **Predict his behaviour**
- ◇ **Self talk**
- ◇ **Avoid conversation**
- ◇ **Lock doors**
- ◇ **Avoid being in the same space**
- ◇ **Give him everything he wants**
- ◇ **Keep kids out of his way**
- ◇ **Imagine a better life**
- ◇ **Do what he says**
- ◇ **Going to work/school**
- ◇ **Call Police**

Thank you to our recent donors/sponsors

Kind and generous donations from organisations, private philanthropists and various grants enable us to continue to service the increasing number of requests for help. We sincerely thank our loyal and generous supporters.

Ballarat Grammar

Donation received from their International Women's Day fundraiser to the general work of WRISC.

Wendouree Lions Club

Contribution to the general work of WRISC.

Alfredton Rotary Club

Advocacy for in-kind donation of phone sim cards for clients.

How you can help?

WRISC continues to seek sponsors and corporate friends to assist us to continue to do the work we do. These relationships can be flexible and tailored to best meet the capacity and interests of you or your organisation. For example, you might:

- Sponsor a program, project or event.
- Make one-off or regular donations to WRISC.
- Conduct fundraising activities for WRISC, or nominate WRISC as the recipient of fundraising events or workplace giving.
- Support our campaigns

If you would like to make a contribution, our bank details are:

BSB: 063-507 Acct: 10042491 Name: WRISC Family Violence Support

OR send a cheque (payable to WRISC family Violence Support Inc.) to: PO Box 1044, Bakery Hill Vic 3354

WRISC - Spreading the message

WRISC have recently had the opportunity to speak at various locations or be featured in the media. These have included:

- Zonta Ballarat Dinner
- ABC local radio
- Alfredton Rotary Club
- Vagina Monologues produced by Ordinary Women's Laughter—closing night
- The Courier BE Feature
<http://www.thecourier.com.au/story/2304451/breaking-point-pressure-builds-on-family-violence-support/>

If you would like WRISC to speak at your club, with your employees or management, or for a specific event, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer.

WRISC Disability Action Plan

WRISC recognises that there are significant barriers in our society that restrict a woman with disabilities accessing services. WRISC has made a commitment to attempt to redress this within our organisation.

Violence against women with disabilities is most often used by men who are in intimate or family-like relationships and provide disability related care. Like all women unequal relations between men and women underpin their experience of violence, however women with disabilities also face the added complexity of unequal power relations between women with disabilities and the rest of the population.

If you would like more information about WRISC services for women with a disability and/or our Disability Action Plan. Please contact WRISC and ask to speak to our Executive Officer.

