



*resilience*

A zine by the ANUSA Mental Health  
Committee

# Resilience

1The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

2The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

- Oxford English Dictionary



## Foreword

What shall follow over the next few pages may be enlightening, exciting and at times frightening. As such, the editors would like to foreshadow the capacity for readers to find some of the content hard to contend with, and would advise caution if reading on may bring up difficult emotions. The written and visual works encompass a number of conditions and stories, both positive and negative. Whilst we have attempted to include a variety of perspectives, the authorship tended to be predominantly female and Caucasian. We acknowledge that this is perhaps a reflection of the culture in which certain individuals do not feel able to share their experiences of mental ill health, as a result of pervasive structural barriers and societal attitudes. Moving forward, we would seek to diversify the voices included in future publications, so that it can be more reflective of the number of different perspectives we have at the ANU.

Lifeline: 13 11 14  
[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467  
[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800  
[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

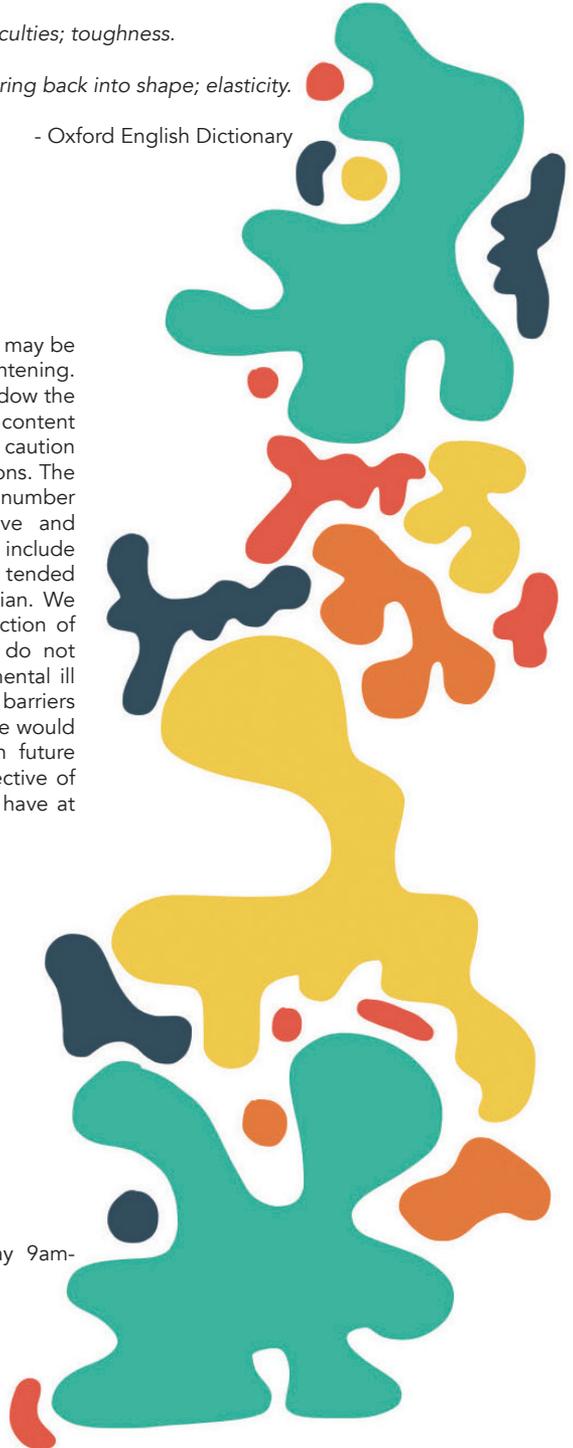
MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

headspace: 1800 650 890  
[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

ANU Counselling Centre (Monday-Friday 9am-4:45pm): 02 6125 2442  
[counselling.centre@anu.edu.au](mailto:counselling.centre@anu.edu.au)



ANU Students' Association  
mental health committee



## Still Fighting

Makayla-May Brinckley

I walk through the park,  
A stunning day, skies blue and a sweet smell  
fills the air.  
I am cheery, sun rays bouncing and glistening  
from my eye.

But I trip,  
Stumble and fall,  
And I am in a mud puddle,  
Muddled and bruised.  
I stand and hear a horrific tear –  
And people just walk on past.  
I call out, ask for help from this desperate place,  
as a stark red appears in my clothes.  
But people just walk on past.  
I get up and reach out for help, but my hand  
waves right through these people.  
And again, I am invisible.

And so I stand,  
Dragging my feet to plant them beneath me.  
Wipe the dirt from my face,  
And breathe in.

Smile,  
At the warrior I have become.



## A Spirit Awakens

Makayla-May Brinckley

I am at the front of a crowded room, waiting,  
waiting.

I step up to the stage, and I am to speak.  
All eyes on me, waiting, waiting, for me to  
open my mouth.

But I cannot speak  
When my heart beats out of my chest,  
And my hands start to shake.

So I remember  
To breathe and think of my ancestors,  
Their spirits pulsing through this land,  
Reaching out from the tree tops to hold me as  
I grow tall.

My feet planted into the ground,  
I rise, guided by their strength and wisdom.  
With the ancient spirits by my side,  
Flowing through me,  
I say my first word,  
And the crowd smiles.

CW: mental illness, anxiety, panic, disordered eating, stigma

## *Anxiety and Ambiguity*

Imogen Purcell

I didn't realise anything was supposedly 'wrong' with me until I was well and truly a teenager. The increased heart rate, nausea, constant pacing up and down, clammy hands, obsessive worries and 'what ifs' – they happened to everyone, right? The complete and utter surety (and ensuing panic) that there was no way I could be happy ever again, because I'd lost something as unimportant as a bobby pin, everyone felt like that sometimes, right?

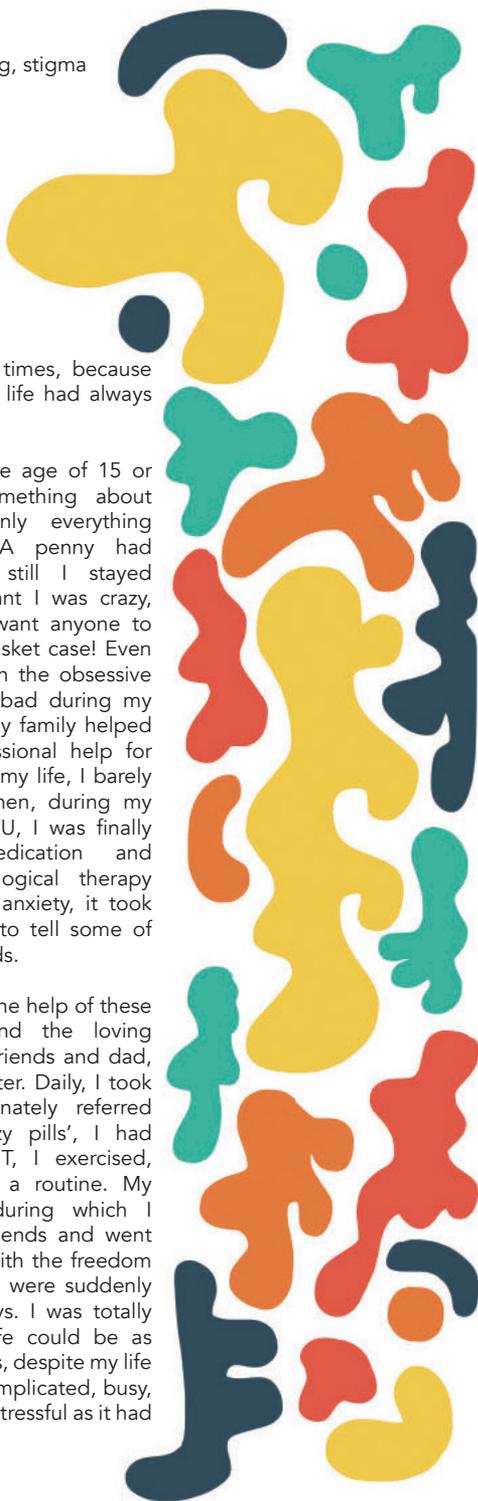
I was sure that, when everyone was six-years-old, they woke up eight times a night to look out the window into the garden to check that their guinea pig hadn't died in the night. I was sure that when everyone was fourteen, they panicked so much that they had forgotten to write in their diary for a few weeks, that they couldn't keep food down for three days.

My constant fear that the bottom was about to fall out of my life somehow was so normal to me that I unintentionally hid it from everyone around me. My nausea was just a 'sore tummy', and my obsessive worries a 'headache'. My parents did take me to get my eyes checked due to these 'headaches' more often than the normal kid, but, for the most part, I managed to avoid suspicion. I rarely articulated the total hurricane brewing in

my head at all times, because it was just what life had always been like.

And then, at the age of 15 or 16, I read something about anxiety. Suddenly everything made sense. A penny had dropped, but still I stayed silent. This meant I was crazy, right? I didn't want anyone to know I was a basket case! Even years later, when the obsessive worries got so bad during my gap year that my family helped me seek professional help for the first time in my life, I barely told a soul. When, during my first year at ANU, I was finally prescribed medication and regular psychological therapy for generalised anxiety, it took me six months to tell some of my closest friends.

And then, with the help of these interventions and the loving support of my friends and dad, I slowly got better. Daily, I took what I affectionately referred to as my 'crazy pills', I had counselling, CBT, I exercised, and I stuck to a routine. My 'good days', during which I laughed with friends and went about my day with the freedom of a calm mind, were suddenly most of my days. I was totally shocked that life could be as worry-free as this, despite my life being just as complicated, busy, productive and stressful as it had ever been.





And then, slowly, I became more honest about what I had struggled with. Becoming a Senior Resident, I realised the power of honesty. I realised that, in by being so secretive for so long, I had contributed to the stigma surrounding mental illness. I wanted people to know that whether they are struggling with a bout of ill mental health, or a lifelong mental illness, there is no shame in reaching out, or needing help. I wanted people to know that you can still live successful, productive, happy lives with mental illness or mental ill health.

There is no shame in the fact that I take a pill for a chemical imbalance in my brain, much like there is no shame in a diabetic needing their insulin. So, I replaced my white lies like, "I just have to run to the chemist to buy a panadol", with "I have to pick up my prescription of Zoloft", "I'm having coffee with a friend" with "I'm going to see my psychologist for an hour", and "I'm having a nap" with "I just need an hour to myself because my anxiety is a bit high today". I felt like I was doing a good thing, and normalising prevalence of mental illness in society. And I thought that was the end of the story. Stigma was dead, and I had played a small part in that! High fives for everyone! But, sadly, I was wrong.

Earlier this year, I applied for and was accepted into a short overseas study course in Mexico City run by an organisation independent to the ANU. I was thrilled that my years-long obsession with Latin American culture would finally be satiated (and all the while getting university credit). I filled out the many detailed forms, and

encountering the question, "what medication do you take?" I answered honestly, without a second thought. Weeks later I was told that my application had hit a small snag, with both the host university in Mexico and the independent organisation citing concerns with my ability to undertake the rigours of an overseas short course. This was due to my disclosure that I take medication for my anxiety symptoms. If I wanted my application to proceed, they implied, I would need a medical certificate saying I was mentally fit.

I was so confused. "But I'm successful and happy", I thought to myself, "I get good grades, I have a social life, and I travel and work and manage my own symptoms well". Over the next few days I became angrier. "I'm an SR! I literally get paid to work in pastoral care." I felt patronised. It made me furious that a random GP, who had previously never met me, was qualified to definitively say I was mentally fit after a ten minute appointment, in which all I did was fill out a survey about my current mental state. But I, who had struggled and fought and conquered my anxiety over 21 years and would likely continue to do so for the rest of my life, was not qualified.

Was I a basket case, like my teenage self was so worried about? Should I have lied? Should I stop telling people about my anxiety? Should I be ashamed?

I swallowed the bitter pill, went to the GP, got my medical certificate. But I decided the answer to my questions were no. It's so important to talk about

our mental ill health, but as a society we also need to listen. We need to listen to sufferers, and not completely distrust the judgement of these individuals in managing their own recovery, with the help of support services out there. We need to listen to people when they ask for help, and view these people as the same successful, wonderful, promising people they were

before they began to struggle. We need to accept that some periods of mental ill health are lifelong, but most are not. We need to know that labels are not always useful, and stigma is real. If we reduce adults and young people to children at the first sign of mental illness, we reinforce the enduring stigma that those who struggle with

mental illness cannot be trusted, and in doing so, we bar people from reaching out for fear they will be considered 'crazy'.

We can only help those suffering by mental ill health by empowering people to take control of their own recovery, and in doing so, reducing the stigma surrounding it.

CW: depressive thoughts, medication, hopelessness

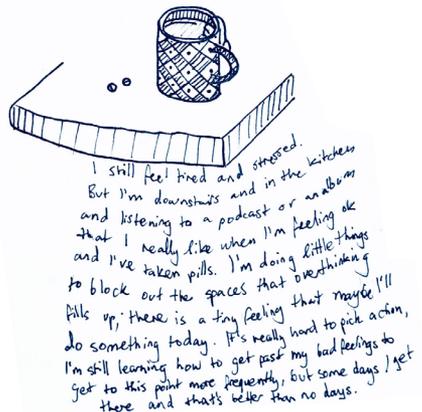
**CBT**  
Anon



avoidance **A**  
1:00PM



**B** action  
8:40AM



# *My Journey of Mental Health at ANU*

Zena Anne Mason



One thing that I have learned, from my recent diagnosis of being on the Autism spectrum, is how exceedingly difficult it can be to get it right. As an adult who has formed coping mechanisms and masking strategies, it is hard to get a proper diagnosis which takes your life experiences, and not just your current situation, into account.

When I first joined ANU in 2013, I had already been told by a few people that they thought I had Asperger's Syndrome, but I did not know how to follow this up or confirm it. In the craziness of O-Week and trying to fit in at Fenner Hall, I had no energy (they didn't say "spoons" back then) to pursue concerns of my own personal mental health. The entire focus of my life seemed to be: "I've made it to university. I have to do everything I can to prove to my family, potential friends and to the professors that I am a worthy person." At the same time, this was coupled with an intense fear of people's negative criticisms and of making mistakes.

Eventually, it got to a point where every moment of my day was daily ritual of obsessive checking and rechecking of everything I did: eating food, submitting assignments, thinking of what to say to people. I checked things so many times that I began to question the nature of my own

existence, and the agency and validity of every single one of my actions.

I did express concerns for my mental health to the counsellor, and after I was referred on, to the GP. But because of my defensiveness, there were many things that I never talked about, even with the GP. I was fine with discussing physical problems, but the idea of discussing mental issues seemed completely weird to me. I did not even realize that a "referral" meant being referred to a psychologist.

Whenever I tried to broach the topic of being on the Autism Spectrum with a professional, I was always asked questions like "do you have limited interests," "do you find it difficult to understand non-verbal communication" and "do you have repetitive habits." But many of these diagnostic criteria are based on the already established coping mechanisms. Just because someone does not insist on routine, it does not mean that they are not Autistic.

Growing up in my particular situation, I had been denied many coping mechanisms and learned to live without them. I was fine without these coping mechanisms, so long as I did not have to engage with the real world, but going to school meant that this false composure

soon crumbled.

I had been an extremely lonely university student with anxiety, depression and a complete denial that there was anything wrong. My coping mechanisms had been to mirror other people. Since learning that this is one of the ways in which females with high functioning Autism mask themselves, I decided that I would read through the diagnostic criteria and try to find evidence for challenges which I have faced consistently throughout my life.

Now I will be able to integrate this diagnosis into things such as Education Access Plans, which will hopefully streamline the process of explaining my mental illness to professionals I encounter regularly.



## On Antidepressants

Claudia Rowe

For some they are a game-changer, for others their effect is unremarkable. However, for many there exists a constant stigma surrounding the use of antidepressants, condemning them as an easy solution to overblown and minute issues.

My ongoing struggle with mental ill-health has meant that I have waded through the tense debate over the use of antidepressants for many years. Everyone I have encountered seems to believe that they are an expert on the issue and that you really should heed their advice. For me, though, the most difficult debate has been an internal one, influenced by my conflicting perceptions of mental wellbeing.

I used to think that I needed to help myself, to do it on my own and that medications would be pointless and an easy fix to a potentially lifelong issue. My use of an SSRI came at a cost to my sense of self and perception of my own resilience, because taking a pill at first seemed like I was overblowing the proportions of my own ill-health and using an easy fix.

When my GP first prescribed them, I felt like I had reached the end of the road and this was my last option, but, at the same time, that it was so pathetic that I had come to this point.

I constantly wrestled against giving in, wrongly believing that I was drastically different to who I thought I was by taking them. I grappled with just sticking it out a bit longer and being, frankly, severely ill with few other options.

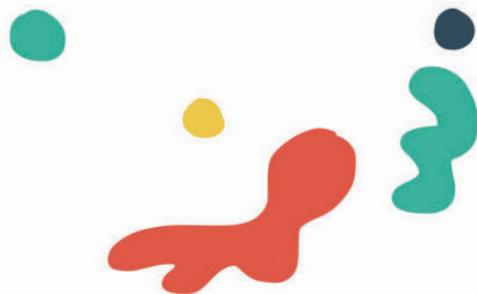
Despite this, I have come to realise that to not take my tablet would be to sentence myself to debilitating illness. It wasn't a case of me giving into myself and being cured with no effort, but I still struggle to this day to deal with the stigma among my friends and family and even within myself. However, I am learning – through much trial and error – that my own perceptions are so wrong.

After months of changing my medication and the dosage, managed by healthcare professionals, I realised that it wasn't an easy fix at all because it didn't make me happy and "cure" me. Yet, it lifted the dense fog in my mind and gave me a break from the relentless anxiety and the misery of darkness. It lessened the forceful impact of my anxiety and the intense self-injury that came with it. I still have bad days and periods of awful spiralling sadness and manic anxiety, but now I also have days where I accomplish things and my mood isn't as overwhelming.

The use of antidepressants is

a very personal choice, but one that can be significantly influenced by social stigma. I've been told that they are addictive and could change my personality forever, but at the place I'm in now, I don't feel changed. I feel strong and ready to recover and strive for better mental wellbeing using many tools such as meds, CBT and a complete range of my beloved self-care activities.

SSRIs were my game changer, but people need to revise their interpretations of the rules of the game of mental health.



## Finding My Marbles

Madeleine Parker



"There's a resilience that comes from understanding how your own mind works."

I heard this quote recently and it got me thinking.

For a long time, I was afraid of my mental health. I'd heard that mental health issues ran in my family and I was determined for them not to run through me. I decided that, for me, resilience was not talking about my problems, it was being strong and independent and powering on.

All but a few aspects of my mind were kept to myself and my journals. However, at some point during my first year of university, I became so embarrassed by the way my mind worked, that I deleted four years of journals.

Around this time, I was regularly getting drunk to the point where I lost my mind. During the day, my mind was occupied by caring too much about what people thought about me. I knew this was destructive, but I had this idea that I was resilient, that I could deal with this and power on.

By my third year at university I was fed up with myself. I didn't want to care so much about what people thought. I wanted to learn more about my thoughts and be kinder to myself. I started

writing journals again, but I also talked to more people. I quickly realised that being vulnerable and honest made it easier to be resilient. Life was better when I talked about things more because I didn't have to go through stuff alone.

I felt like it was time for me to challenge myself and get some perspective. So, that summer I spent two months at ANU here in Canberra, then one month in South East Asia. It hit me how much there is to learn about the world and about myself.

During that time, I received an email telling me I'd been nominated for the marketing campaign at my university titled 'Know Your Mind'. I came home to do honours, we made a video, and plastered my face all over the city with "Know Your Mind" next to it. I felt weird about claiming to know my mind, so I started joking about losing and finding my marbles.

While I think knowing how your mind works is an important part of resilience, I don't think we ever fully know our own mind. I'm always getting to know new things about my mind. There's so much to learn about ourselves and the world, and I love that I'll never stop learning about it all.

For a few years now, I've been

trying to work out how to organise those learnings in some creative and collaborative way. That's why I've started two projects: Finding Our Marbles and Let's Talk About it. They're both about sharing stories, learning more about ourselves and others, and building resilience. Finding Our Marbles is more about my story, while Let's Talk About It is more about other people's stories.

Let's Talk About It is particularly relevant to ANU students because it showcases stories of people at ANU. You can listen while walking around ANU in an app called Podwalk. This app is only on iPhone, but you can also listen on SoundCloud and follow a specific link on Ggoogle Maps I've created.

If you want to check out my projects and get in touch, you can find them at [www.findingourmarbles.com](http://www.findingourmarbles.com) and [www.letstalkaboutit.co](http://www.letstalkaboutit.co).

I'd love to meet more people and collaborate on projects, so if you'd like to contact me you can find my details on the website.



DON'T UNDERSTAND

Journal Entries

Katie Ward

Excerpts from my journal in 2015 when I deferred my degree to dedicate myself to full-time recovery from depression, anxiety, and an eating disorder.

MAYBE YOU JUST HAVE TO LIVE THE SMALL THINGS

ALONE

STAY AND SINKING

IT IS LIKE TRYING TO SEE THE WORLD THROUGH A THIN VEIL THAT BLURS THE SHAPES AND PULLS THE COLOURS AROUND YOU.

YOU WILL PUT THE STAR IN STARTING OVER

IT'S COMING BACK

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER.

ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL BUT WONDERING WHY YOU EVEN TRIED FIGHTING AT ALL.

HOW DO YOU BEAT THIS?

This is the day I decide not to run.

fine

fine

Come on. It's fine. You're ok.



fine 315

you did it fine



IN MY LAP IS A HANDFUL OF CRUMPLED STARS.

you will

THUNDER + LIGHTNING



the closer you're come to living in a long long time

WHICH THOUGHTS ARE TRULY MINE

will I be

YOU ARE STRONG ENOUGH.

FUCK

I'm sorry.

Why is

Stop. Stop now.

THE ONLY PERSON THAT YOU HURT WAS YOURSELF. AND NOW YOU JUST HAVE TO SAY SORRY, AND MEAN IT.

fine fine fine

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT

I'M DOING.

DON'T STAY ALIVE THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH



BUT THIS THING TURNS YOU AGAINST YOURSELF

FUCK

# Social Connectedness and Mental Health

Nick Blood



I feel that sometimes the conversations we have about mental health are far too narrow. As such, I would like to broaden the way we think about mental health and wellbeing.

One of the goals of many student clubs, and even online spaces like 'ANU Schmidtposting', is to promote social connectedness. We probably all know that being social is good for us – we are social creatures after all, but the huge extent to which it can benefit and determine physical and mental health was surprising to me.

There is a wealth of research demonstrating that 'social connectedness' has a positive impact comparable to exercise, and that a lack of it is a risk factor for mortality comparable to smoking and obesity. Other studies describe social connections as a critical component of resilience, where social networks act as shock absorbers during difficult times. The transition to university is a supremely relevant example in this case.

The current mainstream approach to mental health (practiced in government and elsewhere) usually fails to recognize the benefits of social connectedness. This is an interesting point to apply here at ANU. Consider our own university's in-

stitutions, our own mental health programs, and the general discourse around campus on this topic.

Too often, I've seen students arguing that better mental health support on campus means ANU paying for more counselling staff. While that obviously makes sense, there's a clear benefit to taking a broader, multi-faceted approach. Yet these alternative approaches are rarely advocated by students in discussions on the topic, and rarely acknowledged by ANU itself.

ANU's mental health resources page has only one segment dedicated to social connectedness, and it's framed as a reactive measure taken to combat loneliness, rather than a proactive measure to promote wellbeing. Tellingly, that advice on building social connections isn't included in the 'Wellbeing' category.

One driving reason behind having student organizations – and a core responsibility of all of them – is to create a sense of 'community'; to build social connectedness. But things like the ANUSA Clubs Council (which funds and organizes all our clubs on campus) often do not have any explicitly defined mental health role, nor do they play any overt role in advocating for the benefits of social

connectedness.

This is despite their clear benefit, which may rival or even exceed that of counselling. Importantly, these communities also provide mental health benefits in ways that counselling does not, or cannot do so as easily.

They're also different things. For example, research shows that social connectedness helps prevent depression (one of the most common mental illnesses in Australia), whereas counsellors generally focus on treating it. 'The prevention is better than the cure', as the saying goes. It's easier to stop something happening in the first place, than to repair the damage after it has happened. And yet, we're still focused on fixing problems, instead of stopping them from happening in the first place.

The research suggests that perhaps we should focus on incorporating the less obvious, like getting students into clubs and other aspects of university life as part of an explicit mental health campaign, in addition to our well-established approaches of ensuring good health through our lifestyle habits and access to professional support.



# Looking Up

Rashna Farrukh



## 創刊詞

創造美好的將來

今天是香港兒童的生日，因為專為兒童而設的《兒童日報》面世了。《兒童日報》的出版，是香港兒童的光榮，因為世界各地的兒童，少離有一位專為他們出版的日報。

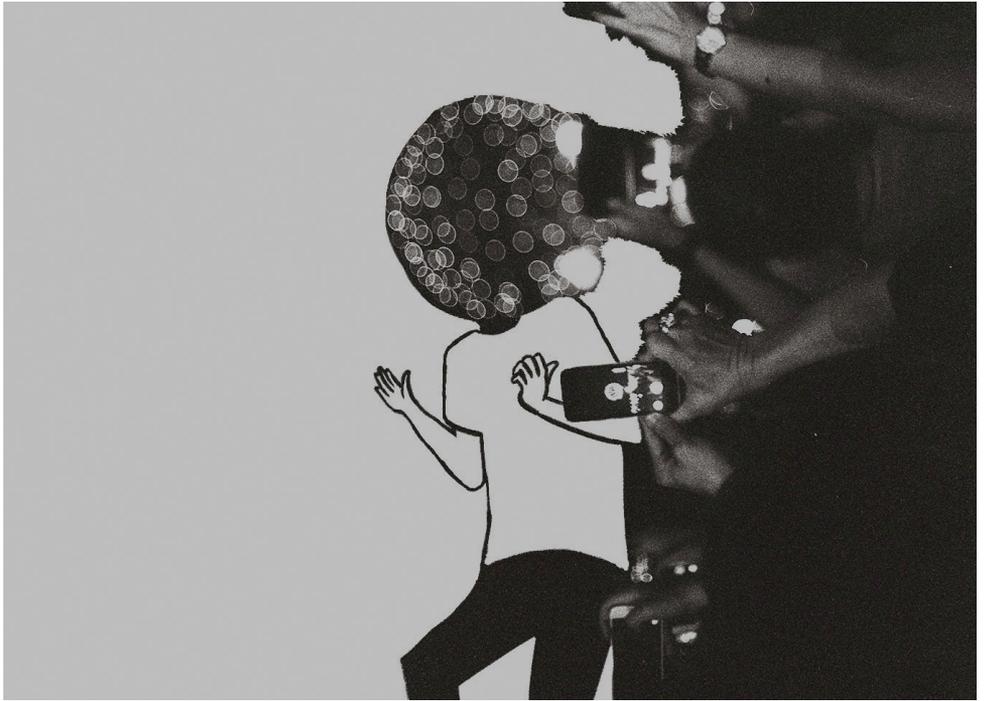
《兒童日報》所以敢於衝破種種障礙，與大家見面，是因為我們互相相信，兒童是社會未來的主人翁，世界的希望。

我們相信，兒童會揮霍理想，一往無前，熱情而愛心，長大後令世界得更美好，更平等，更和平，更富愛心。

我們更相信，香港的兒童，向上，努力學習，強壯體魄，更富愛心，為香港和中國。

# THE BEGINNING

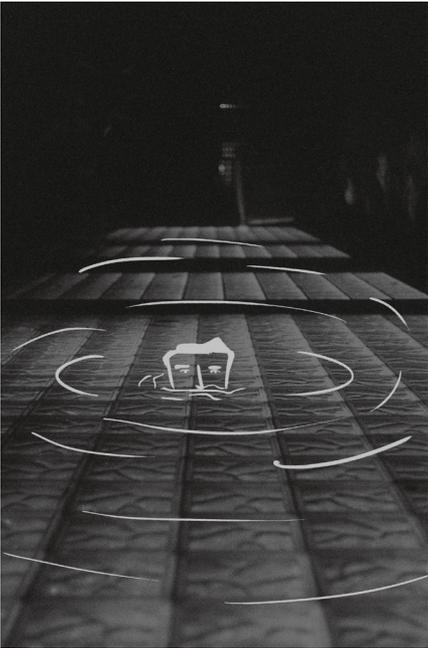
地點：海濱公園  
 時間：上周末正期的  
 節目：上午十時至下午四時  
 除可享用海濱公園所有設施外，兒童日報特別推出十二個遊戲攤位，禮品豐富，同時，還升起一個載人的兒童氣球，由兒童自己操作。  
 辦法：十歲以下兒童可憑本報訂號，到海濱公園黃竹坑正門大廳或金鐘區（金鐘渣打樓入口）領取入場券。  
 注意：成人必須購票入場。由於海濱公園容量有限，兒童節的日期將另行通知。



## White Out

Cormac Relf

Mixed media



# In Deep

Mahalia Crawshaw

I can't breathe  
I can't –  
Think  
I can't –  
Stop crying  
I can't stop crying.

I saw you  
You and your sad eyes  
When you smiled at me  
Or did I imagine them? That sadness?  
I saw your smile  
But you didn't open your mouth to say  
Anything  
You didn't say  
Anything  
I wanted  
I needed  
You to  
But you didn't  
I cried.  
So much.  
For so long.  
I howled.  
The roof came down.  
They brought me tea.  
And that was on the first day.  
And my hands were empty

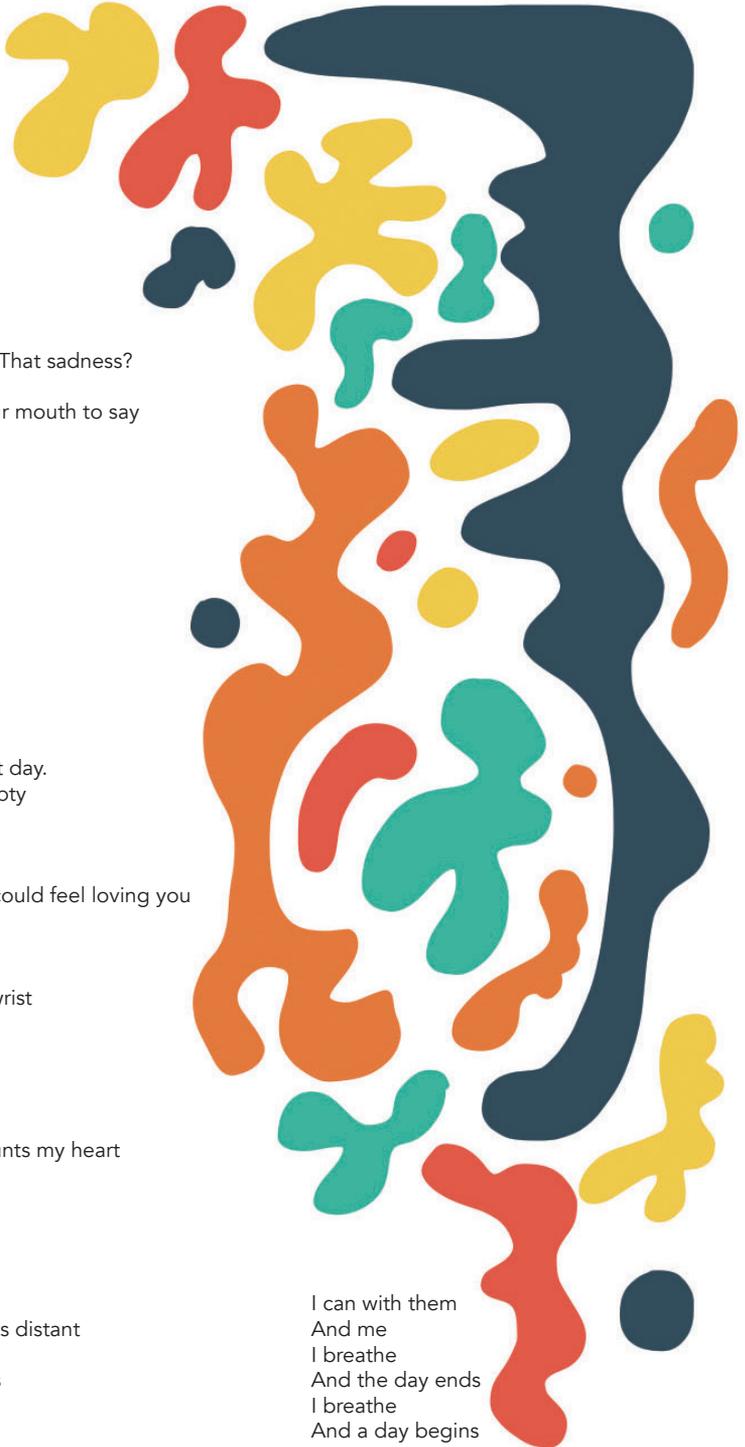
It hurt  
Me  
I used to tell you that I could feel loving you  
A lifting  
Now, it's a clenching  
A dull ache  
A thumb caressing my wrist  
When no-one is there  
Just like you would  
I do not feel warm  
Or safe  
I will.  
You are a ghost that haunts my heart  
But

But –

But.  
I breathe  
And the ache slowly gets distant  
I hold, myself  
I hold myself in my arms  
Broken  
But together  
Shards, fluttering  
I can

I can with them  
And me  
I breathe  
And the day ends  
I breathe  
And a day begins

I can. I do.





## My Black Dog

Sasha Murray



I've been writing and rewriting the words to describe what resilience is when it comes to mental health. I have found myself struggling with how to describe what mental illness is, or more accurately my experience with it. It's hard. There's no real other way to describe it.

I find myself thinking that my 'Black Dog' is a sort of shape shifter. One day, he is as tiny as an ant crawling over a sleeping wolf in the grass. However, the next day, he is the wolf: biting at my ankles, trying to devour me. On these days, I try to play dead; sometimes he leaves me alone, but on others he tears me apart. Then there are the dark days I experience where the wolf has morphed into the monster under my bed. Even though I turn all the lights on in my house, they flicker and switch off and there's nothing I can do but to turn them back on.

But, I realise I am not scared of the dark and embrace the darkness that surrounds me as I lay in my bed. That's when the voice in my head pipes up, "I thought the issue was that you can't get out of bed." That voice is right. But before I can push myself out of bed, I am suddenly held hostage in my own house. Anxiety is the one holding me there.

Where did Anxiety come from,

you ask? Anxiety is always there, but when the darkness comes and I am stuck within it, Anxiety comes to tie me down and hold me prisoner in its clutches. Then suddenly the room is flooded, slowly filling up with water and I am drowning, unable to escape.

People say that 'happiness is a decision', but I am indecisive and my concept of happiness is as hollow as the soul of an echo. This echo is me and I am alone in the air. I am scared of being alone and I grasp frantically at the air, but anything solid slips through my hands, like sand in an hourglass.

That sand turned into time and I turned that precious time into a lie – my excuse of "being busy" is a manifestation of my depression. My loneliness is 'busy'; I am in bed watching YouTube videos and sleeping my life away. But I can't change, I can't stop myself. I keep myself 'busy' to avoid confronting my bed, which grasps onto me like a dead man's hand. The hollow place where my heart should be screams back the echo of my heartbeat, but I am simply a tourist in my own body.

I am still learning how to break the chains of my feather down mattress and how to grasp sand in my hands. I am learning to be resilient and to accept the reality I have created around and within





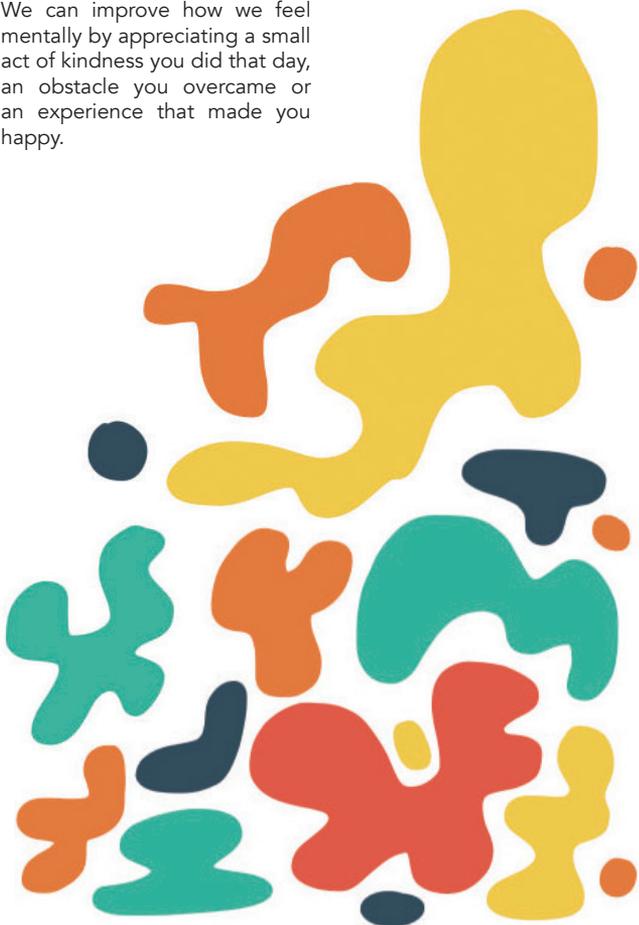
myself. I am a withered rose with broken thorns, but I am strong, outstanding and different. In my hollow chest sprouts a garden, flourishing with sunshine for my wolf and ant to roam around within, to illuminate my dark bedroom and to hold the echo of my soul.

Suddenly, with these changes in my thoughts and understandings, the whole universe appears different. It was as though my body and mind were waiting for it. My garden bursts into a dazzling full bloom, and as much as my heart flutters and I am afraid of being left alone in this garden, I realise, it's these small victories that matter.

It is not a matter of "getting better" or "overcoming mental illness." It's about appreciating the fact I broke those chains and left my bed that morning, that I accepted myself. The victory when I eat more than three pieces of toast that day, when I made plans with friends and stuck to them, rather than retreating to bed for the day and being 'busy.'

We are resilient beings who grow stronger and stronger every day, even if we do not realize it. I am embracing myself and learning how best to deal with my Black Dog and dark days. It is crucial that we all take time for self-care and to let

ourselves feel triumphant about the little obstacles we face daily. Often it can be helpful to maintain a 'Happiness Journal', which allows us to focus on the positive things we experience. We can improve how we feel mentally by appreciating a small act of kindness you did that day, an obstacle you overcame or an experience that made you happy.



CW: psychosis, death/dead bodies, violence, suicide, self-harm, trauma

## Monopoly of Me

Jayne Hoschke

I used to see things that weren't there.  
Every day the bodies.  
Dying or dead.  
Faceless faces screaming with  
Cream at their mouths  
Blackness piercing eye sockets  
Blackness searing, fingertips  
Asking me to hear them.

Or asking me to see them or save them or be  
them.  
Nameless faces, one of them is there  
Always.  
She.  
Stabbing at me with the weapon of her  
Fake existence, my  
Guilt and persistence to  
Live.

Every day the bodies.  
Trees I couldn't call my friends  
Anymore.  
Leaves I couldn't look at  
Anymore.  
Steel wires, I couldn't be there  
Anymore.

So I ran away.

Three times.  
Maybe more but for some reason those times felt  
Real.

By run I mean ride,  
My bicycle  
Is my death and my saviour.  
My ability to follow the bodies and my  
Realisation that I didn't want to.  
Her.  
Not her.  
Stay away from her  
The creaming and screaming  
The blackness searing  
Please please please please please  
Leave.

I rode my bike to do something,  
That was more than that one thing,  
I did alone in my room.  
With my sheets, my quilt, my fist, my guilt,  
My nothingness.

There are photos of me  
With bruises on my head  
Because I tried so hard to  
Pretend.  
It was nothing.  
I was happy.  
Not a burden  
Not a burden.

Pointless faces pointing at my fear,  
Relishing,  
Licking it,  
Throwing it,  
Around the football field,  
Catching and scoring and laughing and gnawing  
At my fear.

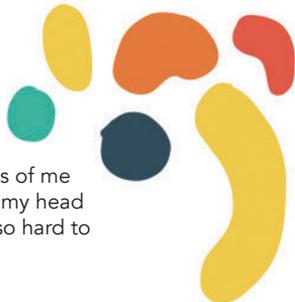
So I ran away.  
Three times.

The first time I collapsed  
By the lake  
And called my friends who  
Found me and held me  
For a while.

The second time I stayed still.  
Silent.  
Unmoving for hours,  
By the lake.  
And I called my friends  
And rode to them and held them  
For a while.

The third time I called  
Only someone I knew couldn't save me.  
Knew couldn't make me  
Be brave and unscathing.  
Not a burden.  
Not a burden.  
Please please please  
She.

Then I called someone who could save me and  
they  
Brought me back  
To reality  
The things that are there.  
Really, really there.





I couldn't pretend all the time.  
Not to psychiatrists and psychologists,  
Families and doctors  
That seemed to care.  
Too much.  
I didn't deserve them, but maybe I did.  
I'm alive  
After all.

The faceless faces aren't  
Meaningless now.  
But,  
The fear, the licking,  
The screaming, the prickling  
Is gone.  
Mostly.

Because I saw them,  
I heard them.  
I stopped trying to run away and burn them  
I saw her.

And I laughed.

At her pettiness.  
Her readiness  
To hate and kill and incite  
Me to hate and kill and  
Hurt.

I used to see things that weren't there.  
But they are always there,  
In the imaginary  
The abstract  
The wild.  
But I'm not afraid anymore.

They are me.



## *From the Editors*

We would like to once again extend a huge thankyou to all our contributors, whose bravery in not only facing their own demons, but also in writing and creating art about their lived experiences and articulate reflections, is a testament to their strength of character. This pilot zine project has been a wonderful opportunity to contribute further to the university discussion of mental health, and hopefully can add some nuanced reflections to the already active conversation within our community. Thanks also to the wider support of the Mental Health Committee, particularly its Chairs Maddison Perkins and Bolwen Fu, as without their vision and expert advice, this publication would not have come to pass.

Eleanor Armstrong (Content) & Katie Ward (Design)

## *From the MHC*

The ANUSA Mental Health Committee has aimed to foster a culture that allows students at the ANU to be able to talk openly and honestly about experiences of mental health and mental ill-health. We hoped that through educational and advocacy initiatives, students would be empowered to take ownership of their own experiences and the way in which they affect their life, both at university and personally. It was from this place that the idea of a zine came into being.

The idea for this zine was conceived when Katie came to a Mental Health Committee meeting and raised the possibility of having a publication about positive mental health. This project was subsequently spearheaded by the incredible Eleanor Armstrong and Katie Ward, who worked tirelessly on sourcing, compiling, and editing pieces of work from the student body, as well as deciding on the theme of Resilience for the publication. The Mental Health Committee is eternally grateful for the many hours of work they have put into this project, handling some heavy content matter, and for making it look as wonderful as it does.

After many months of work and questioning the pronunciation of zine (zeen? zyne? perhaps we'll never find out), the Mental Health Committee is really proud to present its first ever zine publication!

Maddison Perkins and Bolwen Fu  
ANUSA Mental Health Committee Chairs 2017