



# NEWSLETTER

April 2024

The ESTEEM Program has been running at Mercy services since November 2022 and we are excited to share with you our first newsletter!

## Mercy Services Update

At the beginning of 2024 we farewelled Emily (Program Assistant) and Jess (ESTEEM Creative Arts Officer- Movement to Music). We wish them all the best for the future and hope to keep in touch. We were lucky to then welcome Ty (Program Assistant) and Jen (Creative Arts Officer- Movement to Music), both fabulous additions to the Mercy ESTEEM Team!

In the period July 2023-April 1st 2024, we had:

- 55 referrals
- 23 completed program
- 13 declined program
- 1 dropout
- 14 on the waiting list



From now on we are trialing rolling recruitment, with the next available spaces on the 3rd June.



## Research update

**Mercy ESTEEM Pilot data** has been finalised with 25 participant data sets being analysed by statisticians. Fingers crossed for some significant, positive findings!

The Feasibility phase of the ESTEEM project is now well underway at the Mercy site:

- 29 have consented and commenced their research participation.
- 1 drop out.
- 5 have completed data collection for control group
- 13 have completed data collection for intervention group

**The Young Stroke Survivors sub-study** is underway with the involvement of The University of Newcastle Honours students. This study involves interviewing past ESTEEM participants or people considering attending who are under 65 years of age to explore their experiences, likes, dislikes, areas to improve or ideas to make the program more accessible to younger stroke survivors.

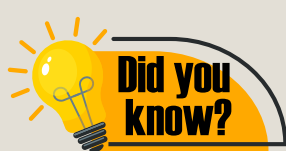
**We welcome Matilda and Sarah to them team!** Matilda is a speech pathologist who runs the Community Stroke Team Aphasia Group and supports clients in navigating health systems. Sarah is a Social Worker currently working with the Hunter New England Local Health District Palliative Care Team. Matilda will be reviewing ESTEEM program delivery and resources to ensure inclusivity for people with communication challenges and Sarah is developing information packages to help people access ESTEEM utilising their available sources of funding.

We are excited to have Maitland Community Care Services (MCCS) onboard to deliver the ESTEEM program to stroke survivors in the Maitland area. MCCS have staff ready to fill the roles of Program Site Co-ordinator and Physiotherapist. Cheryl (Program assistant) and Jen and Dee (Creative Arts Officers) from Mercy will be transferring across to also fulfil these roles at Maitland. Another Program Assistant, as well as a Research Assistant for research data collection and a Research Site-Coordinator will also be recruited. The proposed venue is the Kurri Kurri Hospital Day Centre. The waiting list is building with people wanting to get started as soon as it opens. Di is busily arranging the purchasing of necessary equipment to get underway soon!



### Promotion

An ESTEEM page is being developed on Health Pathways. This is a website under the HNE Health banner which GPs can access when looking for services/resources for clients. It will include links to ESTEEM webpages and brochures as well as referral and GP clearance forms. We aim to promote the ESTEEM Program on the Synapse website (<https://synapse.org.au>). Synapse is a respected Australian Brain Injury Organisation. We are currently working on connections with the Primary Health Network, with the aim being to be a part of their continuing professional development program and to present about ESTEEM at their educational events. Heidi will be providing education about ESTEEM at one of their upcoming Lunchtime Learning online sessions. ESTEEM had representation at the 2024 Newcastle, Lake Mac and Maitland Seniors Expos, and have planned involvement at the 2024 Disability Expo (May) and the Hunter Multicultural Communities Day (June).



The ESTEEM Project Team includes a consumer feedback group, consisting of stroke survivors and carers of stroke survivors. This group meets monthly to provide valuable guidance to researchers to ensure ESTEEM best meets the needs of the stroke survivors who attend. This month we welcome Amy to the group.



# A Minute in the Life of..... Michael Whanau



Michael first participated in ESTEEM in November 2023. He enjoyed the experience so much he investigated ways to return to the program as a paid participant. Michael was able to access excess funds in his My Aged Care Package to enable him to attend ESTEEM on an ongoing basis.

### *When did you have your stroke and how did it effect you?*

I had my stroke in 2017 when I was at work painting. My stroke left me with paralysis down the right side. I can't lift my right arm to scratch my head and my right leg doesn't do what I want it to. I can walk but I'm very slow. I don't think I'll ever get full movement back, but I'm glad I'm still around and that ESTEEM can help me with my recovery.



### *Tell us your thoughts about the ESTEEM Program?*

Excellent! I like everything about it. The instructors are more than capable and there is always someone there behind you in case you fall. I know most of the music they play so I can hum along to it. I'm learning things I never knew about painting and I was a painter!

### *Where might we find you in your free time?*

Cadence gymnasium being put through my paces. I also enjoy getting out in the vegetable garden. At the moment I have beetroot, spinach, chilli's, capsicum and some herbs, as well as some fruit trees.

### *Favourite book?*

For God and Country by James Lee.

### *If we're coming for dinner, what will be eating?*

Meals on wheels. And I don't have to wash up!

### *What is one new thing you'd like to try?*

Skydiving. I'm a painter so I'm not afraid of heights.

*Favourite quote or joke?* A man on a boat is carrying something, what is he carrying? Annette. (That's for Annette from Mercy).

*If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would you choose?* I'd like to have a look around the NT and Kakadu and meet some of the locals.

*Would you survive a zombie apocalypse and why?* Yeh, I'd survive. I'd blend in with them. We Maori's can survive on puha! (Puha is the Maori word for thistle).

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