



Connect-Ed

February 2022
Community Newsletter

New Adventures Await!

Welcome to February! By now we have all settled back into our work routines and are enjoying the benefits of heightened energy levels from our recharging break. As we have learned from last year, we can all be amazingly resilient. My personal takeaway from last year is a greater understanding of what works for me to maintain a healthy balance between work and my personal life and how this balance enables me to be more effective across all areas of my life.

By Emanuel

Starting the Day on a Positive Note



Making sure to stay healthy will have an impact on how productive you can be during your day. Staying healthy by exercising, eating right and getting enough sleep can restore your energy levels and therefore making you more productive for the day.

Some simple activities you can attempt in your day include a workout before or after work, a quick walk and stretch during your lunch break and having healthy eating and sleeping habits. Having high energy levels during the day enables you to put in your best effort at work. **By Penny**

"Do something worth remembering"

- Elvis Presley



Good New Year Habits

Photo Books

Take all your photos off on your phone and create a photo book. Document your year in a covid world, to include news reports, photos of your suburb and family life. Take inspiration, be creative and share.

Create your own meal boxes

Buy snaplock boxes and title each one with the day of the week. Fill each box with the ingredients (not dry) to create that evening meal.

Dress for dinner

Celebrate your week & order take way from your favourite restaurant. Dress up for dinner as if you were to of visited that restaurant; and remember your table manners!

Walking Buddy (virtual or physical)

Put an alarm on, set walking time each day and take a buddy. Hold each other accountable for this time and make it non negotiable rain, snow and shine. Outside is important for your physical and mental health and a great way to catch up with each other.



Ability Connect

Meet our National Manager



"I enjoy the process of empowering individuals to work towards their goals and even more so seeing people achieve their full potential in life."

Emanuel

At the heart of every great team culture is a leader who serves the greater good without hesitation and this month's Team Spotlight features Emanuel Gini, our upbeat National Operations Manager, who has the ability to put a spring in our step, keeping us all connected even while we work remotely.

Emanuel supports and works alongside the Ability Connect team, where together they provide quality options to Participants and find quality solutions for situations ranging from standard to complex.

Read More ... ([Insert link to discovery call pg](#))

The Gift of Assisting Others



Community Care Kitchen

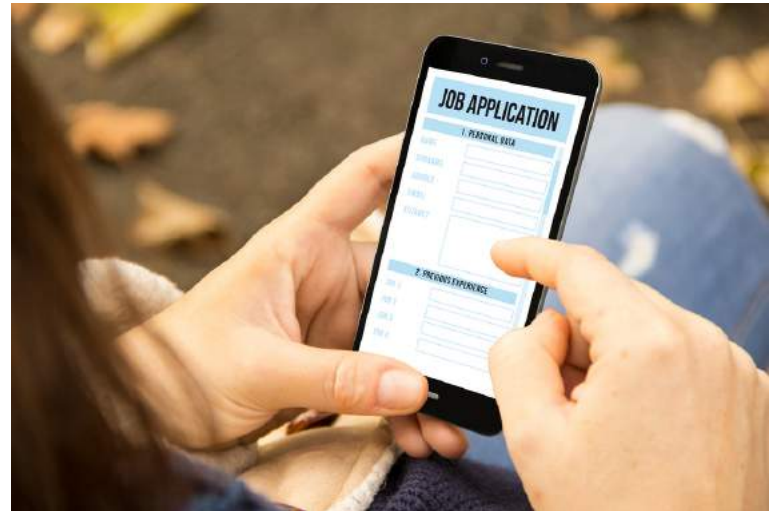
Community Care Kitchen (CCK) is a local, grassroots not-for-profit comprised of volunteers dedicated to serving the community and eradicating food insecurity.

Their work involves supporting the most vulnerable members of our community, including those families living below the poverty line with services that are culturally appropriate and tailored towards multicultural audiences, with the mission to assist those living below the poverty line with care, dignity, and respect while mobilising members to get involved and actively volunteer within their community.

ASD & The pursuit of Employment

Finding employment is an important part of many people's life journey. It can give us a sense of fulfilment, that we are contributing economically and adds value to our sense of self.

Like all job seekers, when embarking on an employment journey, there may be a mixture of excitement and nerves but there are people who can assist along the way. Having a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) should not be a barrier to finding employment whether someone is seeking full-time or part-time work or wanting to start their own business.



As the name suggests, Autism is measured on a spectrum. A diagnosis will be ASD Level 1, 2 or 3 .

ASD presents differently for individuals, with symptoms displayed dependent on the of Level 1, 2 or 3. Regardless of the diagnosed level, there are employment options for everyone. Although there are common aspects to ASD, how ASD presents can be different, such as processing and responding to environmental stimuli, communication and understanding social cues. There are strategies however, that commonly work across the spectrum to reduce an

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individual's anxiety, add predictability, and therefore increase the success of finding, and keeping, a job.

Here are the top 4 considerations that may help support you during your pursuit of employment

1. discuss with your support system what you know works for you. It may be that you require short breaks throughout the day, having access to a quiet space to listen to music, watch videos on an iPad or go for a walk. Being familiar with your coping strategies will inform your workplace how best to support you.
2. When you start your employment journey, focusing on your interests and strengths is the first step. Consider the type of environment you would like to work in and how this would relate to your sensory requirements.
3. Importantly, make sure you have an employment goal in your NDIS plan that is in line with the request funding for appropriate services. The support of an employment service to develop your interview and job skills cannot be undervalued, nor can the input of allied health professionals such as an occupational therapist or speech therapist who can assist with sensory, emotional, and environmental supports, and developing communication skills.
4. Identifying ways for individuals to best engage with their world around them and for employers to be given the opportunity to make small adjustments, will deliver a more inclusive environment and better employment outcomes.



If you already have support coordination funding in your NDIS plan, a support coordinator at Ability Connect will discuss with you your employment goals and provide options for Employment Services in your local area. They will also discuss if you are connected to an allied health team and provide options if required.

Individuals living with ASD thrive in a structured, predictable environment. Having clear instructions and expectations is vital to emotional regulation. A support coordinator will liaise with you, your informal supports and NDIS supports to offer you options to get you started on your employment journey.

Wherever you are in your unique journey the Ability Connect team is just a phone call away and we are here to empower you with choice and control to reach your life goals.

Need support for your smart device or computer?
Tap here.



Get a Chance to Win a Wheelchair Travel Bag



Subscribe to Ability Connect's Newsletter, Connect-ed, for your chance to WIN an amazing Wheelchair Travel Bag worth more than \$800, created to protect rigid/fixed frame wheelchairs in transit.

The competition opens on 1st Feb 2022 and closes at midnight on the 2nd March 2022.

Join Now

Rocket Pesto Pasta ... a team winner!

by Jane

Come home to an easy summer recipe, after a busy day at work. Make a larger quantity for next days lunch or to share with your neighbour. Overtime, I've experimented and also adjusted the recipe to make it easier in terms of buying the perfect amount of ingredients from the local grocery store. It can get annoying to buy a packet of something and only need half or a third of it.

Ingredients

120g rocket, stalks trimmed
2 bunches basil leaves
4 garlic cloves
2/3 cup (or 100-150g) nuts of your choice, toasted (Pine, Almond, Walnuts)
1 cup of olive oil
200g finely grated parmesan, plus extra to serve
Juice of 1 lemon, or to taste
Salt & Pepper to season
500g pasta of your choice



Method

1. Toast nuts of your choice if pre-toasted nuts were not purchased.
2. Combine the rocket, basil, garlic, half the nuts and 2/3 of the olive oil in a blender, season then blend until smooth. Transfer to a container, stir in half the parmesan and the remaining oil, cover and refrigerate until required.
3. Just before serving, stir in the remaining nuts (if you're using almond or walnuts, chop them up before adding), add a squeeze of lemon to taste and check the seasoning.
4. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil. Add the pasta and boil until al dente – please refer to instructions on pasta packet. Drain, reserving a tablespoon or two of the pasta cooking water. Return the pasta to the pan, then toss through the pesto and a little of the reserved cooking water.
5. Serve with extra basil leaves and parmesan.

Tips

- If you really enjoy a strong zesty flavour. Add the lemon juice earlier – when you're stirring in the remaining oil before refrigerating. I also like to add an extra squeeze of lemon in addition to this. Sometimes when I'm going lemon crazy, I add lemon zest into the pesto mix as well!
- You can be creative with this dish. The pasta is the base, you can dress it with any ingredient to suit your meal. As a side dish I like to keep it as is. As a main meal I like to add a bit of chicken. On a weekday after work, I would pick up a roast chicken from Woolworths or Coles, shred it and mix it through (and there'll be leftover chicken for lunch the next day too).
- To keep it light and fresh I like to add in fresh cherry tomatoes with some shaved parmesan.
- To give it a further Italian touch, you can add fresh tomatoes and fresh mozzarella or bocconcini with a drizzle of balsamic glaze – A Caprese Pesto Pasta!