



**WORTHWHILE SESSION:** Sam Project founders Scott and Florence Harrod visited Mount Gambier last week for an informative session on mental health.

# Awareness first step to mental health

## Couple brings understanding of depression and anxiety to Mount Gambier



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MENTAL health was the topic of discussion at the Mount Gambier Community Returned and Services League on Friday night with a visit from the Sam Project.

Travelling across the country raising awareness of mental illness and helping to reduce stigma, founders Scott and Florence Harrod shone a spotlight on mental illnesses and how they can be detected and managed.

Depression and anxiety are currently the most common mental illnesses and this year one in five

Australians will suffer, often in silence and without seeking professional help, mostly because of the lack of understanding of what is actually happening to them or the fear of what people would think.

Attendees at the Mount Gambier session learnt to recognise the early warning signs of depression and symptoms of anxiety and what to do to help themselves or the people they care about when those signs present themselves.

They also learnt how to develop resilience to mental illness.

“Mental fitness should be seen as an investment in yourselves, just as physical fitness is - let’s all get mentally fit,” Mr Harrod said.

The couple reminded participants

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the majority of cases of depression come from life circumstances and perceived stress and for the person affected, those circumstances are absolutely real.

“Help or treatment should always be undertaken as part of an overall plan to get back to full health, be it from a physical or mental illness,” Mr Harrod said.

“Getting the symptoms diagnosed is the first step and then make sure you have a staged plan to get back to full mental health so that you have a sustainable solution, not just a band-aid.

“Those plans may include medication, if so understand why that is the case and when and how to get off that medication.”

Mr Harrod said the overall plan should also include exercise, nutrition, mindfulness and meditation, breathing techniques, development of healthy friendships, being part of a like-minded community, developing a sense of purpose or meaning outside yourself and learning to be grateful for all the things - big and small - in your life.

Pleased with the response on the night, Mr Harrod hopes to return to the Blue Lake city in the future for further sessions.

“We had many comments from people saying the whole of Mount Gambier should have been there,” he said.

“Mental illness is very common and we should all know more about it.

“We hope to return here in the future and it would be great to see even more people there learning about mental illness.”

The couple’s educational material comes from the Black Dog Institute, internationally regarded as a pioneer in mental health research and education.

# Star Watch

WITH Sarah Kulkens

<p><b>ARIES: (March 21 - April 20)</b> Lucky Colour: Cream. Lucky Day: Friday Racing Numbers: 5.3.2.1. Lotto Numbers: 2.13.26.36.35.8. By using that charm on all those around you the chance of a lifetime could present itself. Many singles could decide to make a permanent romantic relationship. Contacts from the past could be friendly.</p>	<p><b>CANCER: (June 22 - July 22)</b> Lucky Colour: Violet Lucky Day: Wednesday Racing Numbers: 1.3.6.5. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.26.35.5.4. Many will be tying up loose ends and some will be extracting themselves out of difficult situations. On the domestic scene many will be re arranging furniture or changing address.</p>	<p><b>LIBRA: (September 24 - October 23)</b> Lucky Colour: Cream. Lucky Day: Tuesday Racing Numbers: 1.3.2.5. Lotto Numbers: 1.15.45.20.32.22. Irritations or outside influences could interfere with personal relationships, so keep your cool. Although this is a progressive period things are not as they seem to be, so get everything in writing.</p>	<p><b>CAPRICORN: (December 21 - January 19)</b> Lucky Colour: Silver Lucky Day: Wednesday Racing Numbers: 1.3.5.9. Lotto Numbers: 8.12.5.44.40.33. A very moody influence around you and you will need to make quite an effort to keep organised. Good chance of an opportunity to bring some of your dreams to reality.</p>
<p><b>TAURUS: (April 21 - May 20)</b> Lucky Colour: White. Lucky Day: Tuesday Racing Numbers: 1.3.2.5. Lotto Numbers: 1.15.25.23.36.7. Not wise to mix business with pleasure, almost anything started this period has an element of success attached to it. There are sudden changes for many.</p>	<p><b>LEO: (July 23 - August 22)</b> Lucky Colour: Blue. Lucky Day: Friday Racing Numbers: 1.2.5.2. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.23.36.32.20. Think before you say anything that could lose support where you need it most. For many travel plans could be altered or deferred.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO: (October 24 - November 22)</b> Lucky Colour: Yellow. Lucky Day: Friday Racing Numbers: 2.3.2.1. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.25.8.6.11. Far distant places or persons could be important in your future planning. Not the time to take risks with any shared assets, avoid speculating on the unknown.</p>	<p><b>AQUARIUS: (January 20 - February 19)</b> Lucky Colour: Green. Lucky Day: Monday Racing Numbers: 4.5.2.6. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.15.26.34.40. For the patient things are about to return too normal. If planning major moves ponder on who gets the most benefit, for now it is wiser to stay with the one you know best.</p>
<p><b>GEMINI: (May 21 - June 21)</b> Lucky Colour: Peach. Lucky Day: Monday Racing Numbers: 1.3.2.5. Lotto Numbers: 2.3.12.26.35.40. A very busy period in which most will have to be careful in making decisions that concern others and their assets, wiser to separate love and career dealings for now.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO: (August 23 - September 23)</b> Lucky Colour: Black. Lucky Day: Wednesday Racing Numbers: 2.3.2.5. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.26.35.40.45. A lot will depend on how you handle the family budget, now is the time to pay bills and return favours. Check the small print before signing anything. Some could get caught between warring friends.</p>	<p><b>SAGITTARIUS: (November 23 - December 20)</b> Lucky Colour: Pink. Lucky Day: Sunday Racing Numbers: 2.3.2.1. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.25.6.30.11. Not too easy to keep the peace in any close relationship. Someone close could be experiencing problems and need your help. On almost all levels stability returns.</p>	<p><b>PISCES: (February 20 - March 20)</b> Lucky Colour: Silver. Lucky Day: Saturday Racing Numbers: 1.3.2.5. Lotto Numbers: 1.12.15.26.30.33. Someone could irritate you so don't take their remarks too personally. For those with the get up and go very many changes coming up and more success is indicated. Luck in a hunch that could pay up.</p>