



WELCOME

As the end of December is rapidly approaching, we would like to take the time to acknowledge and thank you for your support over the past 12 months.

This year has seen our IRS team expand to over 44 staff (with 40 clinicians and 4 administrative staff). We have made new connections with service providers, learnt more about the NDIS and celebrated many participant achievements. We shared birthdays, anniversaries and milestones and welcomed new staff. Sadly, we farewelled members of our IRS family as they embarked on traveling adventures, relocated overseas or left to further their careers in different sectors.

The feedback received from referrers and clients is highly regarded and we appreciate the time taken to express gratitude and provide us with comments and suggestions. Throughout 2019, IRS will continue to strive to provide the best possible, person-centred quality service that reflects our values.

May you take time to celebrate this Festive Season, treasure the time with friends and loved ones and give back to the community. Best wishes for a safe, happy and relaxing Christmas.



*Kate Phillips,
Senior Physiotherapist*



*Natalie Pribil,
Allied Health Leader*

IN THIS ISSUE

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- **Driving assessments**
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Office Hours - Christmas & New Year

We will remain open apart from public holidays.

Limited staff will be available, please call the office on 9885 2533 from 9am - 5pm

MEET THE TEAM: PIP WILSON, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST DEPUTY TEAM LEADER

Pip completed her Occupational Therapy degree in New Zealand in 2007. Since this time, she has worked in New Zealand, the UK and Australia within a variety of acute, sub-acute and community settings.

Pip enjoys the client-centered approach of community neurological rehabilitation and loves that no two days of work are the same. She appreciates the challenge of working with client's who have complex clinical and social needs, and displays a practical problem-solving approach to her work.

Pip has developed a particular interest in Motivational Interviewing and draws on these skills to help client's resolve ambivalence and deepen motivation to pursue the changes that are meaningful to them. She is also passionate about supporting clients who have had an acquired brain injury return to some form of meaningful work.

Pip took on the role of Deputy OT Team Leader in 2017, and is enjoying the opportunity to lead and support the growing OT team at IRS. Pip appreciates working with such a diverse, inspiring and skilled group of clinicians and loves the positive work culture that exists at IRS.



MEET THE TEAM: ALEX SCOTT, ACTING PHYSIOTHERAPY TEAM LEADER

Alex completed her Physiotherapy degree in 2011 at the University of Newcastle in Australia and has an eclectic work history across a variety of clinical settings, both in Australia and the UK.

Alex takes great pride in empowering her clients to self-manage their health conditions within their home environment. Alex finds her work hugely gratifying and it continues to give her a warm, fuzzy feeling.

Alex has a particular fascination for pain science and is currently halfway through a Master of Science in Pain Management through the University of Sydney. She is passionate about environmental sustainability and likes to spend her weekends hiking around Victoria.



MEET THE TEAM: AMBER BURNHAM, SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

Amber completed her Speech Pathology degree at La Trobe University in 2006. She has more than 10 years experience working in Community Rehabilitation with clients with acquired brain injury and specialised experience working with clients with Movement Disorders (e.g. Parkinson's Disease) and accent modification.

She has always enjoyed working with clients and their carers and families in their own environment and has seen great results when clients focus on areas that are important to them.

With a special interest in aphasia, she was an active member on the committee for the Australian Aphasia Association (Victorian Branch) from 2007 - 2013.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DRIVING ASSESSMENTS

VicRoads can request that people have an Occupational Therapy (OT) Driving Assessment. The OT driver assessment is in two parts: an off-road assessment and an on-road test.

Sam Lawless, OT will soon be completing his qualifications in driver rehabilitation and assessment and will be taking referrals from the 10th of December.

Sam is passionate about helping clients either obtain a driver licence or maintain their ability to drive safely.

If you have clients needing an OT Driving Assessment contact us on 9885 2533.



Using Google Calendar to Improve Memory and Organisation after Brain Injury

Following the success of previous Google Calendar Workshops, we will be holding another workshop in 2019.

Tuesday 18 June 2019, 11.30am - 5pm at
IRS Office, 47A Karnak Road, Ashburton

Facilitated by Susan Petrie, Senior Occupational Therapist and Kate Philips, Clinical Leader, the content will focus on the use of electronic memory aids after brain injury and present results from the recent Google Calendar research study completed in Melbourne.

This practical workshop is ideal for allied health professionals who work in neurorehabilitation and provide or wish to provide memory rehabilitation training with clients.



Cost \$205 includes lunch, training manuals and an opportunity to trial the intervention.

Place will be limited. To book your place click on [EVENTBRITE](#) or call admin on 9885 2533.

Research Projects - Sensory Modulation

IRS, in conjunction with Natasha Lannin Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy and Dr Carla Thompson Neuropsychologist have been successful in gaining a research grant from TAC and ethical approval from La Trobe University to explore the Use of sensory modulation intervention in a community adult acquired brain injury population to reduce behaviours of concern.

Sensory modulation is the method the brain processes sensory information and uses it to generate behaviours. Sensory modulation intervention is the use of strategies to help an individual cope with sensory stimuli and to better regulate their behaviour e.g. if a person feels anxious at the shops due to the noise level, but a sense of touch helps them feel calm, then using a weighted blanket on the way to the shops or wearing a weighted vest whilst shopping may help to reduce their anxiety.

We hope to learn more about the effectiveness of sensory modulation interventions for adults with an ABI in reducing behaviours of concern and improving engagement in meaningful activities; how cost effective this intervention is and capture the perceptions of the occupational therapists providing the intervention.

If you are interested in hearing more about the project or believe you have a client who may benefit from taking part, please contact Susan Petrie (Lead Investigator) for further information (spetrie@independent-rehab.com.au or 9885 2533).



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recently, the Physiotherapy Team invited Clare Kempnich, a Neuropsychologist at Memory Matters to share her expertise and involvement about Behaviours of Concern Research in clients with ABI. This was particularly relevant to our work at IRS as behavioural and cognitive problems are among the most common and troubling consequences of traumatic brain injury.

We heard about her success using the Positive Supports framework for social rehabilitation in the community, this approach places individuals with disability and their goals and life circumstances at the heart of clinical decision making.

In the coming month, we are looking forward to a professional development evening focusing on pharmacology in ABI with Dr Lisa Sherry (Rehabilitation Physician at Disability Medical. Dr Sherry will answer questions about commonly prescribed medications used in Rehabilitation Medicine, their benefits, and adverse effects.

Independent Rehabilitation Services celebrate Christmas with a costume party - *'What I want to be when I grow up'*

