

Media release

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New website offers relationship support to people with chronic illness

Relationships Australia today launched a new website, www.humankind-relationships.com.au to support people living with chronic illness to achieve positive and respectful relationships. The Humankind website provides relationship information, support and resources appropriate for people living with a chronic illness, their loved ones and the practitioners that care for them.

“Every relationship has challenging times. Living with a chronic illness or with a partner who is chronically ill can have a long term dramatic impact on relationships,” Alison Brook, National Executive Officer, Relationships Australia said. “Relationship issues are often overlooked in dealing with chronic illness, however research suggests that good relationship health is fundamental to overall wellbeing. Working to improve your most important relationships can lead to better health outcomes, and this is what the Humankind website aims to help people do.”

“Humankind also provides resources for professionals to enhance their practice by bringing relationships and illness discussions into the clinical encounter,” Ms. Brook said. “The tools available through Humankind support people who may wish to initiate conversations with their loved ones about health and mortality. While these conversations are difficult to have, they provide opportunities for growth and intimacy, which can lead to positive health outcomes.”

Humankind was developed by Relationships Australia with the assistance of a Health Access Grant from Medtronic, a global leader in medical technology. Dr. Rebecca Gray of Relationships Australia and Dr. Toby Newton-John from the University of Technology, Sydney led the initial research.

Having specialised in the psychological aspects of chronic pain for many years, Dr. Newton-John was increasingly struck by the influence of intimate relationship dynamics on the presentation and management of chronic pain among his clients. Dr. Newton-John worked with Dr. Rebecca Gray from Relationships Australia to conduct research on how chronic illness impacts the individual and their most intimate relationships. They also looked at the importance of strong partnerships and relationship health in aiding, restoring and managing health outcomes. This research and the Humankind website will contribute to the knowledge and expertise in this area.

Visit Humankind at www.humankind-relationships.com.au

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