

# MONTHLY UPDATE

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## MARCH ISSUE 2023

### ABI: Out in the City

Our Wellington team had great success at Out in the City on 18 March which was part of Wellington Pride Festival. Our stall had lots of interactions and ABI was the only rehabilitation provider in attendance.

We wanted to create awareness of ABI, what we do, and how we embrace the rainbow community working with us. Thousands circled through during the day and Annie and Emma had lots of wonderful engagement and chats with a whole range of people from Kea cubs, to the Roller Derby teams to university students and MP's.

Annie commented that everyone they spoke with either knew someone who has had a brain injury, or have had one themselves.

We created some banners for the event and if your service would like some for future engagements or events, please let us know.



Emma Woolum (SLT, Wellington) & Annie Jones (Community Services Manager Wellington) at Out in the City on 18 March



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## A note from our CEO

### Long COVID Programme

We've had our first Long COVID referrals this month and are receiving a steady number through the programme. A big thanks to everyone who has been part of standing this new programme up, and the feedback to date is that the support these clients need is similar to that of a brain injury and that practical help seems to go a long way. We look forward to seeing what the next month brings. Please feel free to let your GP know ABI has this service and encourage them to reach out to Michelle or Jonathan for more information.

### Our people

It's not new to me, but there's some wonderful people working at ABI with many completing new or further study this year. Congratulations to Dr. Karen Laing who graduated with her PhD on 30 March and Saoirse O'Connor winning the NZ Communication Award. We are truly appreciative of all your efforts. My update will now include a new feature called 'Spotlight' which will feature a staff member and let you know more about them and what they do at ABI. This month we have our wonderful Saoirse so don't forget to read more about her on page four.

### Don't forget to RAT

A reminder to in-patient and residential staff that RAT testing ahead of your shift should eliminate the need for a mask wearing when in non-client facing areas.

### Our commitment to continuous improvement

A special thanks to Tony and his team with the recent makeovers in Auckland. House 3 has had a flooring make over; the carpet has been removed from all the rooms, halls and stairs and replaced with vinyl.

We have also replaced the carpet in the office with new carpet tiles and same will be done in the lounge in April.



## New team members to join us in March:

Hayley Kerr  
Ginumol Joseph  
Ellen Fusin  
Ruben Matafeo  
Nakiya Shortland  
Shone Shyjan  
Annie Joseph  
Charmaine Tia  
Roy Pappachan  
Evana Sunil  
Zarnia Pickering  
Hannah Scobie  
Teresa Hewson

We're glad to have you on the ABI team!



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Back row: Jonathan A (National AH Advisor & Educator OT), Karen L (OT NW), Dianne S (PT Epsom), Kath M (National Psych Advisor & Psych), Lea T (SLT Ranui), Brendan C (SLT Ranui), Christopher T (PT WGTN), Viv F (Psych Epsom), Emma G (OT Tawa), Marina M (PT Epsom), Fiona Howard (Facilitator)  
Middle row: Kirsty C (OT Epsom), Saoirse O (SLT Residential), Khloe A (OT Ranui), Andrea B (SLT NW), Rachel M (OT NW), Izel G (PT Ranui), Watergate R-L (SW WGTN)  
Front row: Christina G (OT Epsom), Amanda S (OT Epsom), Brianna L (OT Epsom)

## Supervision workshop at NorthWest

At the beginning of the month, 20 ABI clinicians from across multiple disciplines and teams, attended a two day supervision workshop facilitated by Fiona Howard and Erica Hodgson (Umbrella Wellbeing). This was a great opportunity for people to develop or refresh their supervision skills. A number of people attending the course had not been in a supervisor role before and by the end of the two days were feeling prepared to take on supervisees and contribute to the ongoing professional development of others. Experienced supervisors who completed the course felt resourced and challenged by the reflective discussion to improve and extend their practice. As well as being a learning opportunity, this course provided the attendees with a chance to connect face-to-face with other clinicians from across the motu, working in various ABI teams.

The feedback during and following the course has been very positive from those that attended: "It was very interesting and worthwhile, I'm feeling all inspired for supervision now!"

Thanks so much to Kath Murrell and Jonathan Armstrong for coordinating this workshop – the kaimahi are loving these opportunities to bring the teams together and meet peers and colleagues from different services.

Got feedback or a story you'd like to share?

We'd love to hear from you.

[feedback@abi-rehab.co.nz](mailto:feedback@abi-rehab.co.nz)

## Spotlight on Saoirse

**Tell us a little bit about you.**

I am from the Emerald Isle of Ireland! I grew up in a very small village in North Kerry called Ballylongford. I studied Speech and Language Therapy in University College Cork and graduated in 2016. I am a very proud Irish woman and feel very fortunate to have such a rich and beautiful culture. It is rooted in story-telling, music, dance, sport and craic. We have a fantastic Irish community in Auckland so never feel too far from home, despite being on the opposite side of the globe. Still manage to get battered playing Gaelic Football most weekends!

**Why have you chosen the career you're in?**

I have two uncles who have suffered brain injuries. I always found it fascinating how they both had brain injuries and yet were nothing alike. All I knew was that neither of them had a filter and I was taught from a young age not to take anything too personally!

For me, the ability to share stories and form connections with others is what makes me who I am and gives my life meaning. To be able to support someone else with this just sounded like the greatest job of all time. Thankfully, I still feel that way several years down the line.

I started off specializing in Autism and Intellectual Disability with children and young adults. I was surprised by how much I loved this line of work, however brain injury is definitely where I feel most passionate.

Since graduating, I've been very fortunate to work across a wide variety of settings with a wide range of clients, both young and old. From Down syndrome, to Cerebral Palsy to Stroke, in schools, homes and clinics.



*Saoirse O'Connor, Speech Language Therapist at our Residential service in Auckland*

**Tell us about your role at ABI.**

I started at ABI in November 2021. I started off working between Community and the Residential Teams, however, I am now working full-time at the Auckland Residential Service. It has been a very exciting role so far in setting up an SLT service within the Residential setting. We have some incredible residents with the most wonderful stories to share. It has been a real gift to support them in finding their voice and sharing their message in whatever form that may be. To date, my focus has been on dysphagia management and AAC trials on an individual basis. I hope to set up some group interventions this year across the service, specifically targeting cognitive communication.

**Who's been your most memorable client?**

I worked with a beautiful young boy who had a diagnosis of Smith-Magenis Syndrome. I found the key to his heart was ice-cream (we had that in common), so following a videofluoroscopy we decided to bring this into our sessions for oral trials. By the end of our time together, I was known as the ice-cream lady, and he would hit "ice-cream van" on his AAC device repeatedly as he saw my car pull up to his house. Nobody has ever been so happy to see me coming, trust me!