

The Facilitator

The service is facilitated by Russell J. Wilson.

Russell is a retired professional, with over 30 years experience in adult mental health and substance abuse counselling in Australia and England, as well as New Zealand.

Most importantly though, Russell himself comes from a background of considerable early childhood adversity, and has suffered traumatic losses at various points in his adult life, including the death of friends, and family, from substance abuse and suicide.

Some details of his personal background can be found on his website

<http://www.russwilson.coffeecup.com>

*** See the [My Story](#) page

Russell continues to try to

- keep up with the professional literature in the fields of trauma and childhood adversity, their impact, treatment and management
- make submissions on relevant matters to the New Zealand Ministry of Health – see his submission on Trauma-Informed-Care on his website
- provide services to those with histories of abuse, trauma and childhood adversity.

How to Access This Service

Completely confidential, and FREE!

While the service is not therapy *per se* both facilitator and participant are involved in an equal, collaborative, relationship, a “**therapeutic context**” – see discussion of this concept by Barrett on my website:

<http://russwilson.coffeecup.com/Essentials-of%20effective%20trauma%20therapy.html>

Each group is

- open-ended
- open membership
- of duration 1-1 ½ hours each
- limited to 6-8 people per group

You're welcome to join up at any time, but once you've joined, you're encouraged to work through the “full set” of sessions

- 12 sessions for “Survivor-to-Thriver” Group (Content dependent on group needs)
- 8 sessions for Mindfulness Skills

Further Info & To Join:

email: AWayForward@yahogroups.com

All groups at venue(s) determined by consensus of members of the groups.

A Way Forward...



from trauma

for adult survivors of trauma, abuse, and childhood adversity

Peer-Led

Group and Individual Services

from

**Russell J. Wilson
2016**

THE NATURE OF TRAUMA, ABUSE AND CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY

One of the greatest traumatologists and psychiatrists of our time, Bessel van der Kolk, has described childhood trauma as the greatest public health problem today. Not only can it lead to major chronic forms of mental disorder, but also to physical disorders and illnesses. None of us has a life untouched by trauma, either our own, or that of someone “close” to us. Many of those abused and traumatized as children will be likely victims of abuse, trauma and adversity in their adult lives

**– but this cycle can be stopped,
IF you learn how!!**

Worse still, having such problems may be heavily stigmatized, with sufferers feeling ashamed and seemingly with nowhere to turn for help. Even when people do get help, many feel that established, government-run services provide inadequate, often inappropriate, “care”, resulting in further feelings of being stigmatized. This is when support and understanding from “someone who's been there” can be of real value in overcoming the internalized responses to experiences of adversity and trauma, from both our childhood and our adult lives, that can keep us limited in the life we live. Appropriate services provide

- A Way Through, the pain of trauma, abuse, and adversity
- **A Way Forward,** to a fuller, richer, less troubled life

TYPES OF SERVICES

Their Nature and Scope

Initial one-to-one “getting to know each other” session with Russell, with further individual sessions on “special needs” basis.

But primarily, the service provided is by means of two parallel, but in conjunction, groups:

Survivor-to-Thriver Group

Begins by providing education about the nature of trauma, abuse, and adversity, especially their effects during childhood. Such experiences often lead to the survivor having recurrent problems regulating and managing emotions; and difficulties with relationships, with one's self, and with others. In group, individuals develop an understanding of their own patterns of such problems. We then move on to helping you better manage your emotions, your ability to handle stress, to better manage impulses, and to have better relationships.

Mindfulness Skills Group

Learning how our bodies work, and learning how our brain and mind influence our bodies, are now seen by many psychiatrists and mental health professionals as one of the major ways people can begin to overcome the effects of trauma. A variety of approaches to learning mindfulness skills are covered in this group, with the goal being to bring mindfulness to everyday life, and not just to occasional practice.

What Are

Peer-Facilitated Services?

Despite Russell having considerable professional training and experience, the services described in this brochure are very different from the sorts of services you might have received from professionals in the past. Russell considers the most valuable thing he brings to this work is his lived experience of dealing with the effects of childhood adversity, and repeated experiences of trauma, including the trauma of seeing loved ones hurt, physically, emotionally, through suffering mental illness, institutionalization, hurting themselves through substance abuse, and through suicide.

In general, peer support services are equal, mutual and reciprocal relationships, where workers “walk alongside” people during their experience with mental distress. This means that both people in the peer relationship are learning from each other as trust builds. In traditional mental health there is the common focus thinking about moving away from what isn't working, but with intentional peer support the focus is on moving towards what we want and the beliefs and actions that are needed to get there. It is focused on the individual personal strengths of each person in the relationship. **Peer services support but do not substitute for the work of registered health professionals where needed.** Services provided are based on the English “Expert Patient Programme” model wherein people gradually learn to become experts on the nature of, and care for, the chronic or recurrent psychological problems in their lives.