



# The Wellness Pod

Issue 3 - August 2021

## It Hurts

My father broke the news today. I knew that something was wrong because he is not the same person anymore. I am glad that he told me, because now I know. But it hurts. His brain has developed a very rare condition. It's serious but the doctors are giving him a lot of medicine so that his brain will heal. Mother said that I need to be more careful now. I cannot go out quite often as I might catch a cold, or an infection, and put my dad at risk. I cannot bring my friends home either. I understand. I don't want my father to die. I'm making sure that no hair is left in the bathroom after I shower and that the toilet is clean from germs. Sometimes I spend a lot of time cleaning. Perhaps too much. I want to ask dad a lot of questions but I fear that I would upset him. I miss my time with mum as well. We used to go trekking together. Now she's always with dad. I feel lonely but I believe that it's just for a very short time.

## Let's Talk About It...

The impact of parental illness on children varies and each child will cope with the situation in their own way. Often kids think that they need to protect their parents by not making them worry. They try to be perfect and not cause any trouble because one of their parents is sick. Children may feel responsible for the parent's illness or experience internal conflicts about caring for the parent but also wanting to pursue their own interests, like playing with their peers or having fun. They tend to experience many fears and worries and they might imagine the worst if they haven't been given the complete information. If they feel that whatever is happening is too terrible to talk about, they might feel isolated or shut out from the family, because no one will address their biggest concern. As shown in the story "It Hurts" they might try to manage their anxiety by engaging in unhealthy behaviours. For example, even though in some cases catching an infection and transmitting it to the ill family member might be a realistic concern, in some children the sense of risk and responsibility can lead to significant behaviours beyond what's necessary.

It has been shown that anxiety and depression symptoms in school-aged children with an ill parent are higher when they are unable to talk about their experience, when they spend less time with friends and have less time for play or hobbies (Skufca Smrdel 2004; Gorenc 2007). Parents need to be patient, create space for talking and understand their task is more about managing children's fears rather than trying to overcome them completely. Learning about the parental disease will help the child understand what their parent is going through and often knowing more about the illness and how it's treated can take some of the fear away. It is important for the child to get the message that even though the family faces a serious problem, parents still hold the reins, and that despite the uncertainty, they can experience safety.

## Bank Donations

APS Bank  
Account No:  
20001489503  
SWIFT/BIC: APSBMTMT  
IBAN:  
MT85APSB77127007762320001489503  
Beneficiary: Karl Vella Foundation

## Revolut

+356 77532568

## Get in Touch!

 Telephone  
+356 21237928

 General inquiries  
info@karlvellafoundation.org

 Mail  
Karl Vella Foundation, The President's  
Kitchen Garden, St Anthony Street, Attard.

 Website  
www.karlvellafoundation.org

 Facebook  
www.facebook.com/karlvellafoundation



## Self-Care Tips

- Live Healthy - eat healthy foods, get enough sleep, exercise regularly
- Try to do something you enjoy every day
- Find ways to relax, like meditation, yoga, getting a massage, taking a bath or listening to music
- Practice gratitude - every day find, and focus, on one thing you should be grateful for

KVF promotes the wellbeing of children dealing with a loss or a serious illness of a family member. It helps children, aged between five to sixteen, maintain a sense of continuity in their lives by offering educational and psychological support. KVF Centre is located in the President's Kitchen Garden in Attard. All our services are free of charge. Due to Covid we are presently offering our services online.