

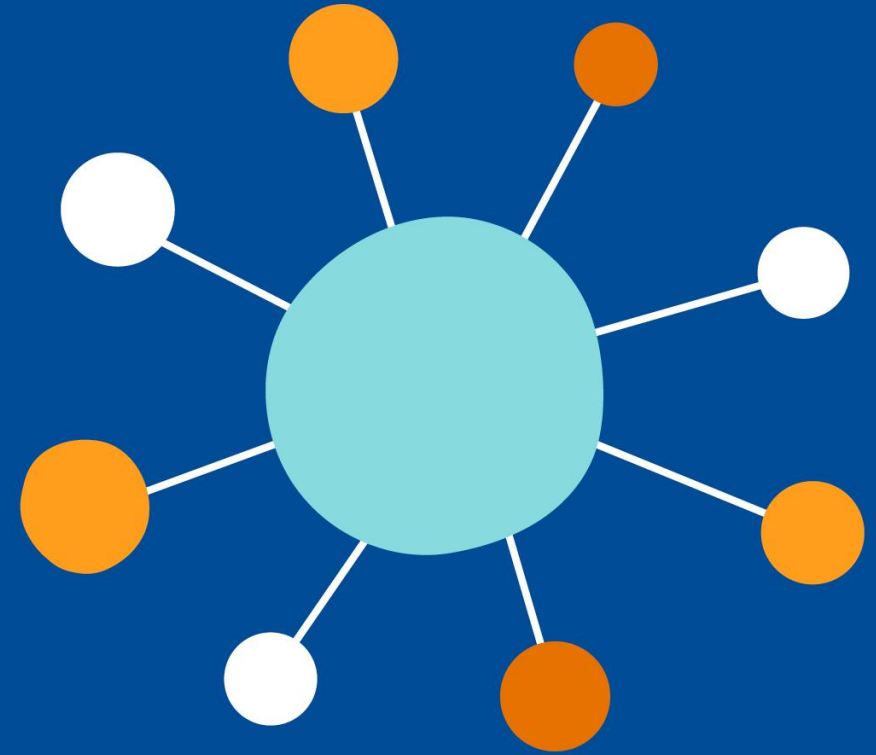
Treatment or Program Innovation

Chair | Stefan Gruenert, Odyssey Victoria

- 1. The other side of the mountain: elevating the carer voice**
- 2. Upskilling and collaboration in AOD services across Victoria: pilot program outcomes**
- 3. Alternative approach to goal setting: chronos approach**



**mental health &
wellbeing connect**
Free for family, carers and supporters



The Other Side of The Mountain

- elevating the carer voice

Presenters



Karen McKnight

– Writer & Workshop Facilitator

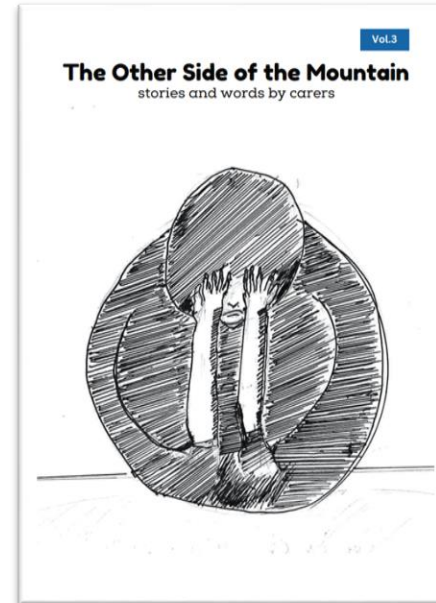
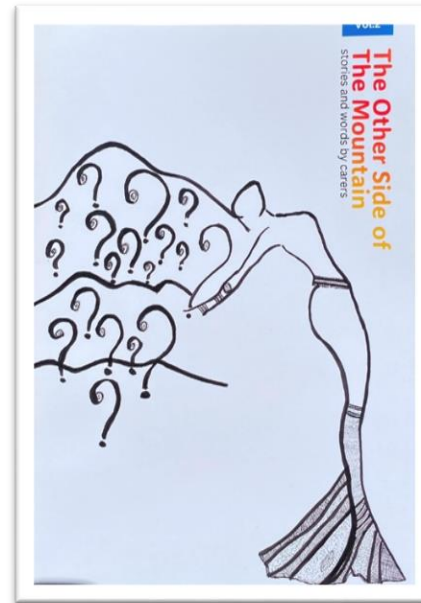
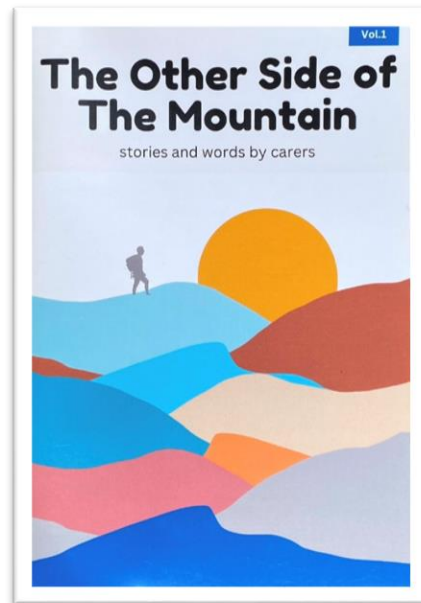
Wendy Trewin

– Writer & Workshop Participant

The Other Side of The Mountain

- Elevating the Carer Voice

'Community-driven, creative approaches in mental health care'



The Invisible Population

Context Setting

- The “invisible population”
- Supporting the health care system & recovery

Challenges

- Emotional toll
- Unpreparedness

Project Overview

- Non-clinical creative approach
- Goal: Foster connection, reduce isolation, provide therapeutic relief



Workshop Approach

Core Elements

- Safe, inclusive space
- Guided writing prompts
- Group storytelling

Therapeutic Themes

- Building resilience through shared narratives
- Reclaiming personal Identity beyond caregiving roles

Engagement Strategies

- Peer-led support within the group
- Celebrating creativity without judgment or pressure



Evidence-based benefits of ‘expressive writing’



‘A major medical advance.’

- Dr David Spiegel, (JAMA, 1999)

- Evidence-based psychological benefits
- Measurable physical health benefits

Participant Voices and Stories

“I found I could write about taboo subjects that would never see the light of day, but with this group of people with similar life experiences, nothing was too awful to write about.”

Free Writing Techniques

“Once it’s out of your head and on the paper, you let it go.”

“It’s allowing what’s underneath to come through and be seen and be accepted and be integrated.”

It's Okay

It's OK to really wish
His age had stopped at 3
A time when life was simple;
he was happy just to be.

It's OK to really wish
He'd been a different child
With a temperament not angry
Much more like meek and mild

It's OK to sit and ponder
Your life before he was born
It's OK to imagine your life
As whole instead of torn.

It's OK to stand your ground
And say "you can't live here"
It's OK to take a stand
And live in peace instead of fear

It's OK not to go
When you want to hide your face
It's OK to wait a moment
Your life is not a race.

- *Wendy Trewin*

Fiction Writing Techniques

“You become the observer.”

“I gave myself a superpower to actually believe in herself.”

Bewildered

You never saw it coming, the first time he started talking without taking a breath. This man you'd been married to for 25 years, this quietly spoken man who would listen to what everyone else was saying, suddenly taking over conversations without letting anyone else speak. This man who suddenly had all the answers and insisted on sharing them with everyone. His arrogance at restaurants was embarrassing, his grandiosity infuriating.

You bristled at him suddenly wanting to manage every detail of your day, analysing your every word and move and telling you how you should have behaved differently, not said this, not done that. Your anger at this was overwhelmed by your bewilderment. You googled, “nervous breakdown” to see what insights you could find. You searched for all of his symptoms.

And there it was. *Bipolar Disorder.*

- Wendy Trewin

The Hero's Journey

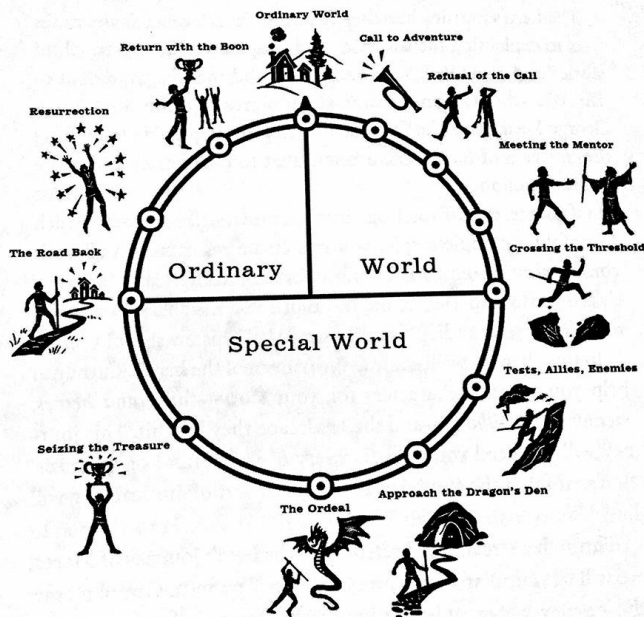
"I didn't realise I was the hero in my own life."

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES

Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey Map



- The call to adventure
- The road of trials & challenges
- The return with the reward

An Unwelcome Interruption

I'm doing well at work, I'm feeling valued and appreciated, respected. Meanwhile, my son is going downhill; a rollercoaster of hope and despair is my new normal. The court charges are mounting up. Drug possession, shop lifting, non-attendance at court, bail breaches, more shoplifting. We are by his side, we want this to end, we want the best for him. We don't share the shame with anyone.

“Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?”

“Yes, Your Honour, we will allow him to be bailed to our address, we will ring police if he breaches his curfew”.

“But respectfully Mrs Trewin, why is this time any different to last time?”

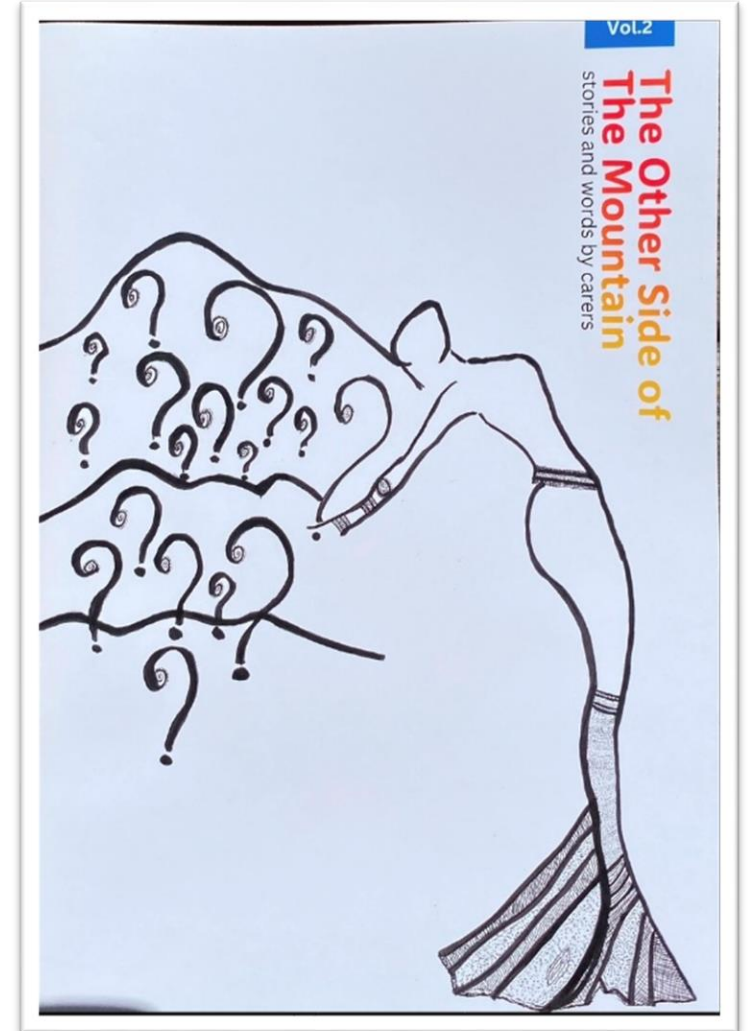
“I don't know Your Honour. I am his mum and I'm trying my best”.

Bail is granted. Court dismissed. I switch off the court screen and swivel back to my work laptop screen.

“Sorry about the interruption everyone, I'm back. Now, where did we get to?”

Significance of this Work

- Relevance to Health Care Systems
- Innovative, Non-Clinical Model
- Broader Implications - Scalable and Adaptable for underserved populations



Conclusion – the power of storytelling

Support

- Let down our guard in our writing
- Someone wants to hear what I have to say! My story is of value!

Resilience

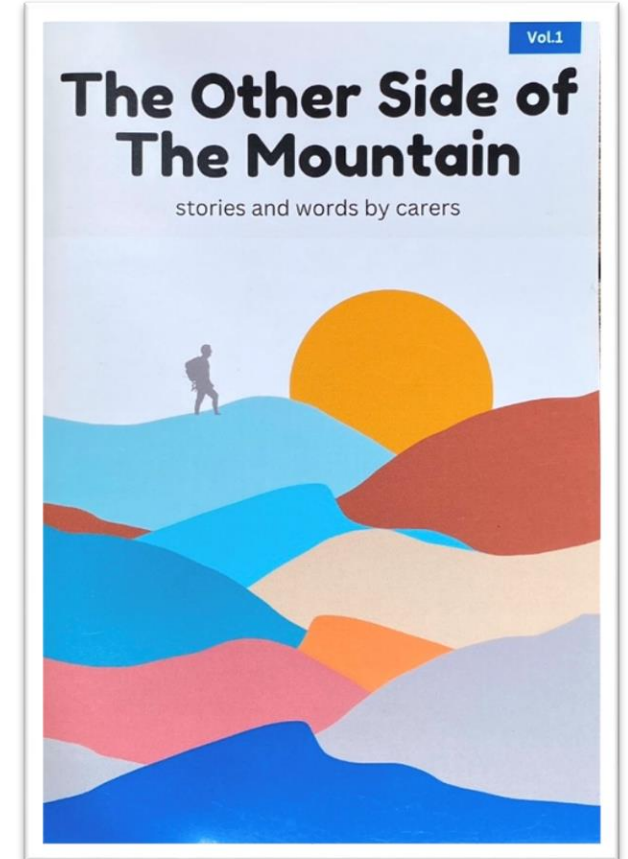
- Admiration of each other's resilience – we learnt from each other

Growth

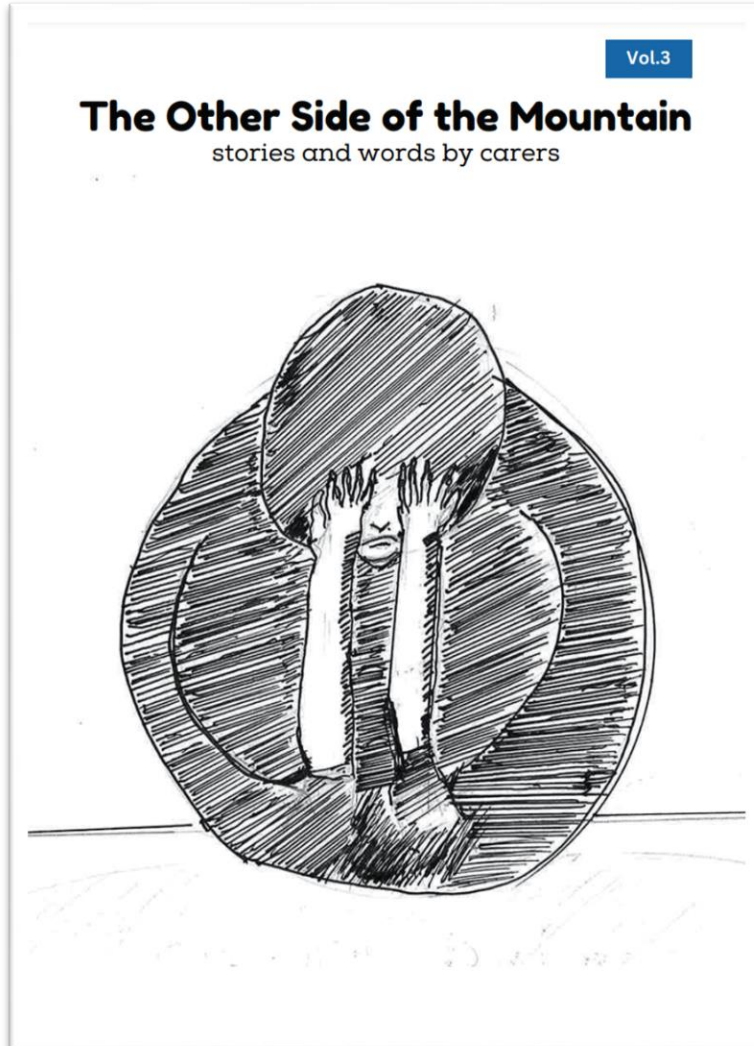
- Better equipped to deal with daily challenges
- Pain with purpose – we will come out the other side

Remembering Joy

- Storytelling is key to building empathy and understanding and finding solutions. We found joy through the sharing of our stories.



Remembering Joy



Storytelling is key to empathy and understanding and finding solutions.
Through the sharing of story, we find joy.

Remembering Joy

No pressure, but I'm trying to remember you, Joy. The surprise of you, the tear prick, the heart softening and surging, the warmth of you. Where are you, Joy?

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