

Collaborating in health care teams and on service models that work—a short drama film/study guide *We Always Dress for Sunday Lunch*—Meg's story

Lesley Pearson¹

¹Silver Chain

The memories

"We always dressed for Sunday lunch".

I am sure that many of us have memories of that Sunday Lunch. Years ago of a time long past, reflective moments, all dressed in our Sunday best. The pressed shirts and ties, kids on their best behaviour, early morning church and the family gathering afterwards for the traditional hot Sunday roast. How times have changed.

Dramas and stories throughout our life mould who we are and how we behave. I am certain many of these same reflections are similar for all of us. Each and every one of us has a story that has developed our unique character.

Silver Chain

Most of you may not be familiar with the story of Silver Chain Nursing Association which began on the rabbit proof fence in Western Australia 105 years ago with a boundary rider by the name of Arthur Grundy.

Whilst reading "Aunty Mary's" page in the local newspaper, the Western Mail, Grundy had a vision to LINK the children of the city with the children in the bush by donating a silver coin. And when the sun shone through his tent glinting and dancing onto a silver chain...the story began.

Back then in the early 1900's there was a recognised community need. Those donated coins were used to fund the first Silver Chain nurse to care for sick Children. And as the first nurse's footsteps echoed through the streets of Perth, the future mission of Silver Chain evolved.

The concept

In 2007/8 Silver Chain recognised another pressing need arising from our ever changing health care needs in our Australian demographics. We as a nation are experiencing an explosion in mental health and physical issues relating to an ever increasing environmental and ecological change.

Silver Chain Albany had been listening to that community voice, and need. It was recognised at this time that there was a need to reflect as people and communities.

Awakening to the spirit of our bush origin, values and ethos of respecting individual rights and their communities

In this Techno savvy world, the doors opened through digital storytelling resulting in the production of a film. Through the production of this film "*We Always Dress for Sunday Lunch*" (WADFSL), Silver Chain

have re-connected this original LINK to the carers and care workers through their emotional intelligence. This has been achieved by evoking emotions with a strong script to provoke thought.

The film is part of an innovative learning health care package, which includes a comprehensive study guide. Via this medium as health care providers we are aiming to disseminate generations of knowledge and understanding about people and their lives.

In “*We Always Dress For Sunday Lunch*” you may not relate to every aspect of the film, but there are parts that you will, as it covers a broad range of emotions and situations. WADFSL is not a corporate film about an organisation. It is about people, everyday people, and real people. The kind of people we are called upon to support, interact and live with every day. Even the kind of people we ourselves are that is what as a corporate training film, makes this drama film so unique.

Just imagine the thousands of stories that have been told through an organisation like Silver Chain which is over 105 years old. WADFSL is a synthesis of these stories which at last have been listened to and given a reason and voice. Opening the doors to those in care living in remote, regional and metropolitan communities to the challenges currently being encountered and recognising those stories which shape our future. Because without understanding, there cannot be connection, without connection there cannot be care. We have to care about the lives of people that have brought them to the place they are today.

Through developing our emotional intelligence we can at last see the Person, without the blurring veil of stereotyping, prejudice and preconceptions of the behaviour and ageism. Without this real understanding there can be no real care. And that’s the published motto of Silver Chain—we care.

The film

We Always Dress for Sunday Lunch is a short drama film of 20 minutes that incorporates a study guide.

The story

Meg and Tom—it’s their story, told with care and understanding. The love, the pain, the hope and the heartbreaks, the secrets we all share revealed against a rural existence of hope and fear, drought and plenty. It’s also a variation on the story of the lives of many thousands who need care and how we have, through the use of multimedia, linked emotion to provoke thought in how we care for, or perceive people.

The origins

We Always Dress for Sunday Lunch commenced as Meg’s Story, written in the rural community of Albany, focusing around a person with dementia. Once the story took shape in a script the subject matter of the film was significantly extended to include grief and loss, post traumatic syndrome, issues of suicide and challenges facing a rural community.

The film speaks to people who provide care, in particular carers of those people who may or may not suffer from dementia or a mental health illness.

Perceptions

A man, a woman, a husband, a wife, a farmer, a cheater, a soldier, a lover—a simple story that lays bare the complexities of everyday life where, on the surface, their story seems simple but beneath it all is layer upon layer of complexity, half-truths, misunderstandings, history, judgements, love and pain. Through our Person Centred understanding we come to comprehend that life as it shows itself is not always what it seems and that our dealings with other people are too often based on preconceptions, prejudices and stereotypes.

Study guide

We Always Dress For Sunday Lunch, through storytelling, aims to deliver key strategies through a study guide and workshops by supporting models of care to sustain healthy communities and, understand individuals by:

- describing how life events affect individuals
- describing how behaviour and perceptions can affect other people
- describes how the environment impacts on a person's behaviour
- describes how a caring role affects individuals
- understanding how we can maintain a person's value base whilst providing care
- understanding the skills and attributes that providers need (emotional, attitudinal, knowledge and values).

Recognition awards

In 2008 we were thrilled that this film won the AFI Cinematography Award in the training film category. You can visit the trailer on www.silverchain.org.au and follow the links to via the online shop to "*We Always Dress for Sunday Lunch*"

Presenter

Lesley Pearson is Silver Chain's Regional and Remote Manager based in the Great Southern Region of Western Australia. Lesley has 20 years' experience working within Silver Chain managing a medical centre, remote nursing post, residential facilities and integrated community health care programs. She has a strong passion in combining the arts in health and the use of innovation in technology to fast track our way of thinking and improving healthy outcomes for all the community.