**Active management and options for pacing.**

**Welcome to session 2**

If, we imagine walking beside a ferny creek, up a hill to a headland then down a sandy trail to the beach, many of us (well or unwell) would choose to pause at a few places on the way. Perhaps we would pause briefly to get our balance before leaping across stones in the creek. If the hill is steeper than we are used to climbing, we may rest halfway. We may stop quietly to admire the light shafts in the ferny glen, take photos from the headland or sit on the beach watching the surfers. That is, various types of pausing help us manage our wellbeing, our interactions with the world and enable us to savour our experiences.

If time was our limited resource on the walk, we may choose just to go to the top of the hill and visit the beach another time when we can swim. If we have a toddler with us, we may actually sit watching tadpoles in the creek until it starts raining then listen to an audio book in the car. In managing our time, we prioritise, discern and consider how we match with the changing environment. When energy is a limited resource (for reasons we don’t yet fully understand) then we can try a similar approach.

To keep a sustainable amount of energy available for use and reduce Post Exertional Malaise (PEM), we can **switch between doing and resting**. It has been suggested in several studies to keep the doing in the range where your **breath stays fairly steady**. We can also switch between **types of resting** including pre-emptive resting to power us later, post-activity resting to facilitate recharging and micro-resting to give us little boosts.

Another tactic is to **switch between types of energy being used**. Sitting upright at a computer and thinking requires different energy than hanging washing. Lying on the lounge chatting with a beloved friend is different from a zoom telehealth call or stepping across stones in a creek. We may find ourselves tired in one area but able to carry on in another.

We can also **practice adaptability**. This may help us out when either our personal situation unexpectedly changes (e.g. having a bad sleep the previous night) or external circumstances change (the doctor is running late).

**Single task processing** can be mentally easier than multi-tasking but what about physically? What suits best today? A care book is handy to remind us of tips for when we are too tired to think what to try. Our individual personalities, preferences and symptom range all mean we will often choose some tactics over others.

Some people use blocks of time set out in the day to help moderate energy usage. Some find this impractical as their days vary too much and adaptability is essential. In each case, however, it can be useful to periodically check-in and **listen to the body, energy capacity and current level of ease**.

The key is that we have options: to move between resting styles and between activity types throughout our day.

“Pacing is a good idea” seems a simple sentence, but when you have a lot of hopes, a to-do list, responsibilities and ideas but energy is limited, it can be confronting to say the least. Adding nuance and giving ourselves a greater skill range provides us with more ways to manage daily life and keep within our energy envelope.

Like most skills, understanding the principles, choosing what you like and practicing when you can, helps things gradually develop. Learning keeps it an **active** process and strengthens our **agency**.