

We’re people like you

**Peer Group Chat**

**Date**: 08/12/2022

**Title**: Laughing It Out

**Description**: Finding humour in difficult situations can be a great coping mechanism. Let’s come together to discuss how having a laugh and incorporating humour into our lives can help us to cope with everyday complexities.

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| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Hi everyone, First, we’d like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight.   Welcome everyone to today’s Peer Group Chat talking about laughter & humour!**  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Amber22 and myself will be facilitating tonight’s discussion. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, anyone could benefit from the value of humour.   We’ll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it’s entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. @Jynx, a counsellor, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety.  If you’re having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (**[**https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs**](https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs)**) or message @Jynx.** |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Welcome @Hope0011 ! :) |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Within this group tonight we’ll be talking about:  -How humour can benefit us in practice   - Navigating our respective boundaries, in terms of what is and isn’t ok to laugh about   - Mental health memes**  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Hey there @Captain24 ! |
| Captain24 | Hi everyone   |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join**😊 |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Hey @Cassie :)   |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Welcome back! @the magician !  |
| the magician | hi people!  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Let's get started for tonight! :)**  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q1: Do you ever try to find humour in some challenging situations you find yourself in?  Do you think this could be useful for you?** |
| Cassie | often, I attended a funeral online today and messaged a friend who also attended online- I said that crying was hard work and it should pay better. I find that it relieves tension  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Welcome Anne! :)  |
| the magician | turning a serious and uncomfortable technical discussion into a joke is always well received.   |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I try to find humour in a lot of things that I go through. I think that it’s really useful in some situations for me, it makes me realise that often things aren’t as deep as I might have thought. It's kind of a coping mechanism for me in some instances.   |
| Captain24 | When I’m doing well I like to find the funny side in most things. It makes dealing with challenges easier.  |
| the magician | at funerals particularly my fathers a  8 dead jokes help to cope - people think you're insane for it but it helps bonding. |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I get that @the magician , it helps if people around you understand your humour too or have similar humour to you  |
| Cassie | oh there was quite a bit of humour throughout the funeral too- in parts of the eulogy   |
| Cassie | I like the reply to-  Are you ok?  No, but I'm funny  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Hahaha that's a good one @Cassie   |
| the magician | sometimes i think when a romantic situation doesn't work out because you're a client of a service- better get a cat. more dependable.  |
| Cassie | I learned whilst training in facilitation that jokes can stop things from going to a deeper level, so I think there is a time and a place for it. For example the funeral today wasn't all jokes, there was room and invites to mourn and cry too.   |
| Cassie | Cats are great!  |
| the magician | if you don't mind me asking whose funeral?  |
| Cassie | not someone that I had actually met, a friend's mother. But I like that I was able to learn a bit more about my friend from attending, even if I couldn't support her there in person. She had people closer to her to support her today anyway  |
| Cassie | It's something that I really appreciate has become a norm out of COVID, that has continued- funeral's being streamed online  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q2: Where do you draw the line when using humour around something as sensitive as mental health?** |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Hey! @chibam :)  |
| chibam | Hi, @Amber22 (PSW) ! :) |
| the magician | when being funny gets derogatory. so that you are only recognisable as whacky.  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I use it on situations that I know aren’t going to linger around for a long time, or things that I know will resolve themselves quite quickly. Anything that is prolonged or a lot deeper I think about using humour because I am very aware that sometimes it can come off as insensitive to others (if they don't have the same humour as me).   |
| Captain24 | I think when someone is confiding in you with their darkest thoughts. There is no room for humour. Also if it’s degrading in anyway.   |
| chibam | IMHO, there isn't a line. Anything that can be made funny ought to be made funny. Imagine if we - as a society - were willing to take all the misery and turn it in to laughter? Why wouldn't we do it if we could?  |
| Cassie | When it's not about my own experiences of mental health- I wouldn't want to be making jokes about types of mental health that I don't know personally.   |
| the magician | its important to be sensitive in personal matters . not to cause offense.   |
| the magician | i have an extended family joke that every family has a weird or crazy one. it kind of creates acceptance.  |
| chibam |  @the magician But then it gets complicated because, if your miserable in response to someone else's misery, are you "being sensitive", or are you just fuelling their misery?  |
| Jynx (Moderator) | I think the line is very context-dependant - i.e. like Captain24 said if someone is confiding in you or it's a heavy topic maybe humour isn't appropriate... or maybe you just need to wait for the right moment. And that will vary person-to-person as well. |
| Cassie | I think humour can be used to punch down- I like the saying about gallows humour.  Something about jokes made by the person in the gallows is gallows humour, jokes made from the crowd is part of the execution  |
| Jynx (Moderator) | Lotta wisdon in that @Cassie   |
| the magician |  @chibam think its a matter of being sensitive not taking jokes too far but also using them to brighten the mood  |
| chibam | But the execution is going on anyway, whether or not the crowd laughs, isn't it? All else being equal, isn't a world with a happy audience better then a world with a miserable one?  |
| the magician | if you're offended call it out that that was a bit hurtful.  |
| chibam |  @the magician See, to me, there is nothing more painful then a room full of uncomfortable people, where nobody's laughing.  |
| the magician | agreed   |
| Cassie | But it depends who they are laughing at- it's one thing for the person being executed to make the audience laugh, it's a very different thing to laugh at the person being executed  |
| Hope0011 | I think we need to be careful about self deprecating humour as well. It's not the kindest thing to do for ourselves.  |
| chibam |  @Cassie Sorry, you've lost me there. :|   |
| Jynx (Moderator) | There could be a whole side-conversation here about mob-mentality. Again it probably comes back to context, who is laughing, what is being made into humour, etc.  |
| chibam | @Hope0011 It all depends on what your considder to be deprication. |
| Captain24 |  I don’t believe we should be laughing or making fun of someone else. We should be laughing with them    |
| chibam | @Captain24 But the problem is, how can you ever respect someone (as opposed to simply tollerating or accepting them), if you can't laugh at them? |
| the magician | if someone eats a raw sausage roll they're so hungry at night they'll never live it down but if someone is abused on a date you definitely don't laugh. yes there is a difference between laughing at someone and laughing with them .  |
| Hope0011 |  @chibam Good question. Anything that seems funny at the moment but is really just a shot at ourselves and our flaws.  If we wouldn't say it to someone else we shouldn't say it about ourselves - even if it's in jest.  |
| chibam | See, IMHO, a person's ability to evoke joy and laughter within us is directly tied to our private perceptions of the value they pose to our lives.  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q3: What kind of humour do you find to be the most beneficial for yourself? E.g dark humour, witty, slapstick, dry/sarcastic, silly, etc.** |
| Captain24 | But @chibam how does the person being laughed at feel?  |
| chibam | @Captain24 I'd imagine they'd feel pride, knowing that they've uplifted the lives of others, and been an asset to their community. |
| Hope0011 | I love silly humour. Sillier the better. Don't ask me define what's silly thought - it just happens.  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I find that dry sarcasm is the best humour for me. Especially when sarcastic humour is used on a light-hearted situation (like something going wrong in my day to day life for example).  |
| chibam | Q3: I love idiotic humor. The Simpsons. Naked Gun. Laurel & Hardy... anything where there's a bumbling nitwit going around doing hilarious stuff. |
| the magician | spontaneous classic comments  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I guess it really depends on the person and their kind of humour, everyone is so different!!  |
| the magician | i just like the humour when the other person gets it  |
| Hope0011 |  @chibam I am not sure I agree that a person would feel pride when laughed at.  There are so many scenarios when this wouldn't happen. A lot of bullying involves mocking and laughing at people.  |
| Cassie | I think it can be good to check in with people and ask them how they feel. I remember a situation where myself and someone else were lightly teasing someone about something, but my friend checked in with them to make sure they were ok with it, also noted that sometimes we're ok with that until we aren't for whatever reason. It was a really valuable lesson  |
| Jynx (Moderator) | Absurdist humour is my fav <3 |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Oh wow that is a great lesson! @Cassie   |
| Hope0011 |  @the magician like when you can share a look and you both know what's going on  |
| the magician | that closeness is nice  |
| Hope0011 |  @Cassie thanks for sharing just now. That's really insightful. Sometimes what starts out funny may not end up being funny for all.   |
| Cassie | I have had to really unlearn laughing at people, my father mocked people a lot. I also remember when my nephew was young and we were watching funniest home videos- gosh am I showing my age? lol Anyway he was fairly young and mortified that we were laughing at people hurting themselves- I really had to have a hard think about that. I still watch disaster youtube vids sometimes though    |
| chibam | @Hope0011 Well, I guess the follow-on from that position is: "What's the alternative?" Does the person want to cease being a source of joy and laughter, and instead be something that is quietly & uncomfortably tollerated? |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I always found Funniest Home Videos to be hard to watch!! I felt bad when they would hurt themselves, but so many people found it funny too @Cassie   |
| Cassie | @hope0011 yes and sometimes it goes too long, or too many people join in etc. |
| the magician | i like it when things are too funny . if you're the source of entertainment though you need to be assertive with it.   |
| chibam | @Cassie @Amber22 (PSW) I used to like Funniest Home Videos; although the later hosts were insufferably corny & over-the top. I miss Graham Kennedy. :1f627: |
| Hope0011 |  @Cassie I blame my habit of laughing at people when they fall over on growing up watching the funniest home videos. Now I am older I see that it's not all that funny, but there are still those funny videos out there that still bring on a belly laugh. I was taught to laugh if I hurt myself so maybe it came from there. Then there was It's a Knockout - remember that.......  |
| Captain24 | Oh how I loved it’s a knockout @Hope0011 |
| Cassie | Graham Kennedy was a bit before my time really. Like I know of him but that's about it  |
| Cassie | I don't remember it's a knockout  |
| the magician | my nephew who is bouncy he falls down six steps gets up and keeps running like it didn't happen. I call him an action hero - it makes me laugh.  |
| Hope0011 | I don't have a lot of great memories of my Mum, but talking about It's a Knockout made me remember how much she also laughed at people flying and bouncing around. Thank you for sparking this memory  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q4: What are some ways that you use humour to foster healthy relationships? Whether it be with friends, family, etc.** |
| Amber22 (PSW) | If your friend or family member shares the same humour as you it can make it a lot easier to understand each other and make jokes about certain appropriate things. My best friend and I have the same humour and so when something goes wrong and one of us responds to it sarcastically it can leave both of us laughing about the circumstance.  |
| Cassie | I know my friends sense of humour pretty well, I like making her laugh. Same with my mum  |
| the magician | positive humour things you have in common with people or flatter compliment. always with them not at them.  |
| Cassie | If you get humour right with the audience, it can relax and bond people. Co-regulating and whatnot  |
| chibam | Q4: When I'm stuck with people I'm not keen on, often I can zone out and just mentally watch a sitcom, ect. Sometimes a "sitcom" of my own concoction, or sometimes a real show/movie I've seen. When it works, I can pretty much erase the real-life person/people from my consciousness and ultimately walk away with only funny memories of the encounter. |
| Captain24 | My best friend and I have a similar sense of humour and are able to laugh over anything.    |
| the magician | steer clear of sensitive derogatory comments. things that are really unsuitable or not tactful.   |
| chibam | Q4: (cont'd) I don't have much to be proud of in my life, but the little I do have to be proud of is the times I made people laugh, and therefore gave their lives some value. |
| Hope0011 | Myself and a close friend are experiencing difficult times with our kids. We use humour to alleviate some of the pain and it then often leads to chatting about other things.   |
| Jynx (Moderator) | Yeah honestly a person's sense of humour can tell you a lot about their values and thus give you a sense of whether they are a safe person for you to invest time into  |
| Hope0011 |  @Jynx (Moderator) It took me years to know what my values are - I had lost who I was. And yes, now I am clearer on that front it makes it easier to bond with people - including humour.   |
| the magician |  @Jynx (Moderator) such an important point!  |
| Cassie | Cards Against Humanity can be an extreme way to find out if you have shared values lol   |
| Captain24 | I love that @Jynx (Moderator)  It’s so true  |
| chibam |  @Jynx (Moderator) I agree. I'm very passionate about cultivating laughter and joy into the world (and my own life) and eliminating sadness and misery. So as I search for people I want to weave in to my life, I search for people with similar values and aspirations.  |
| Hope0011 | Having said that - if their humour is all about putting people down, I know that they are definatelt not worth my time.  |
| Captain24 | I agree @Hope0011 |
| Hope0011 | I feel weird about Cards Against Humanity - maybe I need to lighten up.   |
| Cassie | I don't think we can ever completely eliminate sadness and misery- they can be important parts of life too. Ways to process things. I'm not saying that people should suffer. But sometimes sitting with someone who is sad can be what they need more than being fixed/ cheered up  |
| Cassie | Cards against humanity certainly isn't for everyone- it can be triggering etc.  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **I don't think you need to feel to feel weird about that @Hope0011  - its absolutely not a game/style of humour for everyone**💜 |
| Cassie | snap  |
| Hope0011 |  @Cassie One of my daughters used to have a fit if I tried to use humour to cheer her up. She took it like I was making fun of the situation and therefore her feelings. She just wanted to be heard and made to feel safe.   |
| the magician | theres a time to be happy and a time to be sad  |
| chibam |  @Cassie Maybe we can't \*completely\* eliminate it - just as we can't \*completely\* eliminate all other sickness and disease. But shouldn't we at least try to get as far down that road as we possibly can?  |
| Captain24 | I think that is away of showing a persons character by being able to sit @Cassie   |
| Hope0011 | I think there is a place for extreme sadness and happiness. We need to experience it all. It's just when we sway too far into sadness and don't have the skills to know how to deal with it that it can become problematic.   |
| Hope0011 | My ex used to say Just be Happy and it really grated on me because it's unrealistic to be happy all the time and he completely dismissed my times of sadness. Then I was introduced to the book "The Happiness Trap" and it validated that it's Ok and frankly not healthy to be happy all the time.   |
| the magician | happiness trap made me sad so i didn't read it  |
| Cassie | how did it make you sad?  |
| Hope0011 | I am sorry it made you sad @the magician   |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q5: Mental health memes have become a popular tool to help individuals feels that their experiences are validated. What do you think about the ones you’ve come across?** |
| the magician | talking about all the things that can make you unhappy naturally.  |
| Hope0011 | Honestly, I think I must be living under a mushroom, I can't recall seeing any.  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I think that they are really funny in most circumstances! I guess it is also a lot to do with where you are in your mental health journey and how you humour is. Sometimes they can be a bit insensitive, but sometimes it is nice that you can relate and feel like others get it too (in a bit more of a comical sense).    |
| chibam | Q5: Wow. I'm pretty familiar with memes, but I can't think of too many mental health ones I've seen. :/ |
| the magician | i think it is definitely important to be listened to and heard.   |
| Captain24 | I’ve seen a couple and I feel like ‘that’s me’  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Here check this thread out on the forums :)  @Hope0011 <https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/The-Ice-Memery/m-p/1117393#M266044> |
| the magician | what are memes?  |
| Cassie | I specifically follow some pages and groups on facebook to get more mental health memes. Some don't land for me though and I just figure I am not the target audience for those ones  |
| Hope0011 | @Amber22 (PSW) Oh the labrador one just made me giggle. I have a lab and a Moodle and neither of them can catch - it;'s hilarious!!!! Maybe I need to check in to see what their mental health is like before I throw treats for them to catch. |
| Jynx (Moderator) | @the magician  From Wikipedia: An Internet meme, commonly known simply as a meme (/miːm/ MEEM), is an idea, behavior, style, or image that is spread via the Internet, often through social media platforms. What is considered a meme may vary across different communities on the Internet and is subject to change over time. Traditionally, the term mostly applied to images, concepts, or catchphrases, but it has since become broader and more multi-faceted, evolving to include more elaborate structures such as challenges, GIFs, videos, and viral sensations.[1] The retronym derives from the earlier concept of a meme as any cultural idea, behavior or style that propagates through imitation. |
| the magician | cool mental health memes as a way of educating!  |
| Cassie | has anyone made there own memes? I have only made a couple but not mental health related  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **I've made my own memes :1f602:  Not super often, but sometimes I experience something that matches an existing meme so well that I simply have to make it** |
| Hope0011 | No, but I always think I would like to.   |
| Amber22 (PSW) | I haven't but I'd like to as well  |
| chibam | Nah. I'm exclusively a consumer. ;p   |
| the magician | i don't like the joke on media that people with disability cant be hot . i object!  |
| Cassie | I have found online meme generators to be pretty easy to use  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q6: What are some of your daily sources of humour?** |
| Hope0011 | Back to my nuffy pooches, every time I try and get them to catch the ends of carrots and they hit them smack on the forehead or they look the other way, I think this could be good material. Or the other day when they both were pooing at the same time, one in front of the other, it was pretty funny and I was trying to thing what that could sum up.    |
| Captain24 | My dog would  have to go close. Other than that not much really  |
| Cassie | sounds like you have constant material and inspiration for memes in your dogs hehe  |
| the magician | convo with mum daily boring stuff made funny. ridiculousnesses.  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Definitely memes online and being able to see that others relate to it too and are feeling the same as me.  |
| Hope0011 | @Captain24 what breed? |
| chibam | Q6: All the funny shows I've watched throughout my life. There's not much good comedy coming out of Hollywood these days, so I mostly coast on replaying the old classics in my mind. |
| Captain24 | Chihuahua @Hope0011 Little pixie |
| Hope0011 | Ohhhh - cute @Captain24 |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Aww!! @Captain24 |
| Hope0011 | I love Modern Family. That humour cracks me up. I remember my Nan used to love the BEnny Hill show - so wrong now.......  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Modern Family is sooo good! @Hope0011 |
| Hope0011 | It's great humour - no swearing, no sex -, awesome dialogue and facial expressions! Not that I don't like shows with those things but Modern Family is so different to many other shows.   |
| the magician | your pooches would make a good animate short.  |
| Hope0011 | What is an animate short @Captain24 |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Q: Have you learned anything helpful from others’ experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?**  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | That humour is dependent on the person and that everyone takes it as something different, what works for some may not work for others :)   |
| Hope0011 | I loved the response from @Cassie about checking in to see if the person being laughed at is still ok.   |
| the magician | sometimes we think things that are funny that are not.  |
| Jynx (Moderator) | Humour is as important as any other way of coping and/or connecting  |
| the magician | its good not to be toto serious all the time.   |
| chibam | I'm still confused, TBH. Some people want misery, apparently, and I just don't get that. Makes navigating the world and society so impossible.  |
| the magician | theres a difference between misery and allowing yourself to express a sad emotion.  |
| Jynx (Moderator) | I think it's less about wanting misery and more about making space for seriousness where needed, and humour where needed. A balance, like all things in life  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **I don't think anyone's said they actively want misery in their lives. Rather,  sometimes upsetting things happen, so it's ok and natural to feel sad about it. Often we can learn from that sadness (usually temporary) in how we might like to move forward.**  |
| chibam | Like I say, I just don't get that. To me, that's like saying "it's important we make room for cancer where it's needed".  |
| Captain24 |    People don’t want misery but down times are a part of life.   |
| chibam | @Captain24 But what if we could cure that? I really believe that we can. |
| the magician | you can learn a lot of positivity from down times too.  |
| the magician | its like a wave  |
| Cassie | why would we cure anything if we were just laughing at everything? If we weren't sad or angry at anything, no reason to change anything.   |
| chibam | @Cassie Exactly! We'd have reached a near-perfect standard of living!  |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do?** 😊 |
| Hope0011 | Sadness is one of our core emotions and we can't just try and pretend it's not there. We need to make space for it when we need to.  If we cover up our sadness it can make someone really unwell.  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Yes some self care would be great - I am going to have a nice cup of tea tonight :)   |
| Cassie | Just like in the movie Inside Out- Hope011 |
| the magician | sleep. long day. gym and cleaning in morning. mp3 player. |
| Jynx (Moderator) | I think I'll have to pop on something funny! Maybe even watch some Modern Family ;)  |
| Hope0011 | I haven't seen Inside Out. Heard lots about it though.   |
| Cassie | I love it!  |
| Hope0011 | Yessss @Jynx (Moderator)   |
| Cassie | I think I might do some art.   |
| Captain24 | I think I might have a shower and go to bed. It’s been a big day  |
| chibam | I have a backlog of recorded TV I need to start burning through.  |
| the magician | good night all thankyou for the chat. see some of you next week.  |
| Hope0011 | Thank you everyone. This was my first chat and it was really good.   |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **As well as any nice things you might do for yourself, we'd also encourage you to reach out for any support if you think you might need it**💜 |
| Jynx (Moderator) | So glad to hear it!   |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:  1 : Why We Should Take Laughter More Seriously** [**https://www.ted.com/talks/sophie\_scott\_why\_we\_should\_take\_laughter\_more\_seriously?la**](https://www.ted.com/talks/sophie_scott_why_we_should_take_laughter_more_seriously?la)**2: The Superpower of Humour** [**https://www.ted.com/talks/judy\_croon\_the\_superpower\_of\_humour**](https://www.ted.com/talks/judy_croon_the_superpower_of_humour)**3: Mental Health Memes (Forums thread):** [**https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/The-Ice-Memery/m-p/1117393#M266044**](https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/The-Ice-Memery/m-p/1117393#M266044) |
| **Girasole (Peer Worker)** | **Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion** 😊 **If you’d like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here** [**https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat**](https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat)**. You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!**  |
| Amber22 (PSW) | Good night everyone! :)   |
| Jynx (Moderator) | :1f60a: |