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## Peer Group Chat

Date: 19.10.23

**Title:** Embracing our Imperfections

**Description:** There can be a fear that our imperfections or differences will set us apart from others. But, our imperfections, and our differences, are also what make us unique. Let's come together to explore and embrace our imperfections, how they make us unique and whether they're really such a bad thing after all.

TideisTurning (PSW)	hi @Griffon800! We'll get started soon! :)
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>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. I am joining from Wurundjeri land. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Embracing Our Imperfections.</b>

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Jupiter (PSW)	<p>Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Jupiter and @TideisTurning will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of Embracing Our Imperfections. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, it is important to embrace our imperfections and our differences, and rather explore why they make us unique. 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. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about our imperfections, and what we may see as an imperfection within ourselves. @jynx, who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (<a href="https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs">https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs</a>) or message @Jynx. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about Embracing Our Imperfections.</p>
Jupiter (PSW)	Evening @Captain24 :)
Captain24	Hi @Jupiter
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hey @Captain24 :)
Captain24	Hey @TideisTurning (PSW) Just want to say it's been a really rough afternoon. If I disappear that's why.
Jupiter (PSW)	<p><b>Within this group tonight we'll be talking about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The contrast of perfection and imperfection and their impact in our lives</li><li>- Where our ideas of imperfection might have come from</li><li>- When imperfection can be a good thing</li></ul>
TideisTurning (PSW)	Welcome @icefrog :)
Jupiter (PSW)	Thanks for letting us know Captain

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Jynx (Moderator)	Hugs @Captain24
TideisTurning (PSW)	Take care of you fist @Captain24 , and remember to reach out for support if needed
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>Welcome everyone! We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join. In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourselves &amp; share a self care plan for after we wrap up the discussion his evening. I'm @Jupiter. My self-care for the evening will be to have a nice warm shower to wash off the day. How about you?</b>
Captain24	An early night and cry myself to sleep. I am safe, just grieving over a family pet
Jupiter (PSW)	That's really rough @Captain24 :(
Snowie	Hi all, after this will be a cuppa, journalling and sleep
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi There @Snowie & @Fauna :)
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>Alrighty, let's get into the discussion! Q1: What does perfectionism look like in your life? By contrast, what does imperfection mean for you?</b>
Captain24	Perfection to me is that everything is perfectly in order. That everything I do is completely perfect. Every task I do is perfect. Imperfection is failing. If its not perfect then it's a failure.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Similar to you @Captain24, I think for me, perfectionism is something of an attempt at control where it feels like control is lacking. The definitions I found of 'perfection' include the idea of something being 'as good as possible'. The idea or feeling of imperfection I think arises for me when I don't feel like I or something I've done is enough, or in some cases when my flaws or weaknesses show through.

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Snowie	imperfection for me is a fault or blemish. Being incomplete
Jupiter (PSW)	Perfectionism shows up a lot for me at work. I don't like making mistakes because I can feel like I've let someone down or let myself down. But then I realise it's pretty impossible to be perfect all the time because we are all human after all!
Jynx (Moderator)	I think perfectionism shows up in my life as wanting to be good at something straight away. Like picking up a new hobby or interest and getting easily discouraged when I'm not instantly good at it. I know it shows up in my friends' lives as putting incredible pressure on themselves to be at peak performance at all times, and often punishing themselves for even the smallest of perceived failures.
Captain24	I agree @Jynx (Moderator) I am that person
Griffon800	Perfectionism for me looks like never being happy with products I've created at work, expecting my partner to be happy with me all the time, being unable to create art with the fear that it won't look like how I wanted and kts therefore wasted my time, not being able to build habits and routines because one missed action means I've ruined it and i end up quitting Imperfection is how I feel I am overall
Griffon800	Oh yes I agree as well wanting to be good at something straight away, and intense dissapointmwnt when I'm not
Jynx (Moderator)	So I think imperfection is allowing space for being human - "To err is human" after all. Imperfection is allowing space to fail, because every mistake can be an opportunity for learning and growth. And with new hobbies or art projects, imperfection is the opportunity to enjoy the process rather than the result, and be able to laugh at the outcome in all its ugly glory.

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Captain24	I agree with the imperfection being how I feel all the time.
Shaz51	Hello @Jynx (Moderator) , @Jupiter , @TideisTurning (PSW)
Jupiter (PSW)	Welcome @Shaz51 :)
Jynx (Moderator)	Howdy @Shaz51
TideisTurning (PSW)	"imperfection is allowing space for being human" love this @Jynx (Moderator) :)
Shaz51	My husband feels like that always @Jupiter (PSW)
Jupiter (PSW)	Okay, let's move into the next question. Q2: Where do you think your ideas of imperfection may have come from?
Captain24	My childhood. I was actually discussing this which my dietitian today. Nothing I did was ever good enough. I was never enough. I carry that to this day. I know I'm not good enough.
Griffon800	For me I think mostly from my family (genetic and behavioural kinda) and people from school growing up I went to a great academic school as well which didn't help, basically comparing myself to people getting really high grades constantly But moreso from the family
Snowie	I think it comes from my mother. To her, nothing but perfection was allowed. I was never perfect in her eyes. There was always something wrong or I always did something wrong. She still to this day criticises me. Her snide remarks
Jynx (Moderator)	That's so rough @Captain24 I hope you can find a path that allows you to shed this belief, because it is so, SO not true

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TideisTurning (PSW)	I'm sorry you had that experience @Captain24 . What we're taught when we're young can be hard to shake :)
Jupiter (PSW)	It sounds like a lot of people can relate to 'not feeling good enough' while they were growing up, and that belief has carried on. It can be a really tough one to break.
Shaz51	With me it was my father , mentally and emotionally abused until mum and I left
Captain24	I hear you @Snowie . It seems we have and do have similar experiences with out parents.
Jynx (Moderator)	I think you nailed it with the idea of comparing yourself to others @Griffon800 - it is such a big pitfall and has been a huge source of anxiety for me in the past. Had to learn that no one has lived my life but me, so comparing myself to them is pointless, and the only person I ought to compare myself to is my past self.
TideisTurning (PSW)	The comparison trap can be all too easy to fall into and hard to climb out of @Griffon800 @Jynx (Moderator)
Captain24	I compare myself all the time and I always come up second best
Jupiter (PSW)	I think as humans we tend to do upward comparisons, where we compare ourselves to someone we perceive s better off in some respect. We rarely do downward comparisons, which would result in us feeling better about ourselves.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Something I'm reminded of here is the idea that our imperfections are most obvious to us because we know exactly where to look. Does that resonate with anyone here?
Captain24	Sometimes @TideisTurning (PSW) but mostly it's pretty obvious to all
Snowie	@TideisTurning (PSW) agree 100%

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Jynx (Moderator)	I saw a line about that @TideisTurning (PSW) with the rise of social media - because most folks are only posting about the good times, and trying to display their best self, we only see one side of their life. So when we're struggling, it can be all too easy to fall into the trap of feeling like others' lives are far better off than our own - but we're seeing a warped view.
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>Seems we can all relate to feeling imperfect. Q3: What are your experiences with imperfection? Do you have any examples?</b>
TideisTurning (PSW)	For me, imperfection has a big correlation with the negative experiences I've had as a result of my differences. My experiences with imperfection could be described as falling short of perfect in some way (whether or not I can help it).
Captain24	My life! I have a lot.
Captain24	I was far from perfect today when I struggled to support my mother. I feel like I failed her.
Snowie	I have a lot of examples of growing up being imperfect. There were always faults and they were pointed out often.
Jynx (Moderator)	I don't think that there's ever a perfect way to support someone @Captain24. I was thinking about my own support that I provide on the forums. Some days I really struggle to find the right words and it can definitely feel like it's far from my best work - far from perfect. But I try to remind myself that just being there is also enough.
TideisTurning (PSW)	If you're struggling yourself, it's hard, sometimes near impossible, to support someone else @Captain24
Captain24	I have an example. I was asked what I did wrong when at school I got 98% in a maths exam. It wasn't 100% so it wasn't perfect
Snowie	I was never academically good enough. Was always compared to my cousin who was. Was asked countless times, why aren't you as smart as _____.

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Jupiter (PSW)	I can relate to that @Snowie , I did well at school but my brother was always 'the smart one'
Captain24	Yes @Snowie the only difference is she always told everyone that my brother was smarter than me.
<b>Jupiter (PSW)</b>	<b>Q4: What negative impacts might imperfection have had on your life?</b>
Snowie	Very low self esteem
Jynx (Moderator)	Can see how much the comparison thing is a huge driving force in experiences of feeling like you're not good enough/imperfect
Captain24	It impacts your self confidence, your self worth, your belief that no one would want to know you. You're just not good enough.
Jupiter (PSW)	Sometimes my fear of making mistakes stops me from trying new things and broadening my horizon.
Snowie	I ended up always comparing myself to others. That I was as smart, as thin, as good as the person next to me.
Snowie	@Jupiter (PSW) that is a valid fear. I have that too.
<b>Jupiter (PSW)</b>	<b>Q5: Have you ever seen someone you've expected to be perfect, express or show being imperfect? What impacts did this have on you?</b>



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Jynx (Moderator)	Q4: Feeling unworthy, like I couldn't ever be good enough or deserving of good things. But then, also learning that imperfection is what becomes most interesting about life. Perfection is boring, sameness, and does not facilitate growth or change. My flaws are part of the whole package, and I wouldn't be me without them. Getting my ADHD dx was a huge part of this - learning that I would always be this way, always struggle in these particular areas. Was pretty daunting and saddening at first, but over time I have learned that this is part of who I am, and part of what makes life so interesting.
TideisTurning (PSW)	This can be a really confronting, yet at the same time, a super profound experience. For me, seeing someone who has only ever appeared 'perfect' display imperfection is like a permission slip for me to not have to be, or try to be, perfect 100% of the time. It can be confronting, even a little scary if it's not a side of someone I've seen before, but profound and liberating in the sense it can be like that permission slip.
Snowie	I think it makes me realise that everyone has imperfections. It is impossible to be 'perfect' all the time. I think the first step is realising this and believing in ourselves. Being proud of who we are just the way we are.
Jupiter (PSW)	In the past when I was working with a psychologist, there were times where she would admit to small mistakes, like mixing up something another client had said with what I had. In these moments where she acknowledged her mistake, I saw her as more 'human' and relatable.
Captain24	I had lunch with a friend today. She has the perfect life. Own business, overseas holidays, building a massive home. Had 3 massive homes before this one. The husband 2 kids and dog! It sounds like the ideal life. I discovered today that her daughter is on drugs and won't find a job. Her son and his partner spilt up and she took the child 12 hrs away. It made her seem real.
TideisTurning (PSW)	Yes @Snowie !! A wonderfully well worded mantra :)

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Jynx (Moderator)	Q5: Getting old enough to see my parents as flawed humans, rather than parents who are always right. It was pretty hectic realising the impacts it has had on me, and going through the motions of being angry, disappointed, and then also coming to a place of acceptance, knowing that they, like everyone, were only doing the best they could with the knowledge/skills/experiences they had at the time.
Captain24	Love it @Snowie
Snowie	@Captain24 that sounds like my cousin. She has the perfect life, perfect kids, perfect husband. Well that is what she plasters across social media. She always came across that way all through her life. Truth be told, she is a really nasty person. She is far from perfect.
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>It's a pretty heavy topic this one. Q6: Especially if imperfections are something you struggle with, how might you be able to take care of yourself (e.g. self-care)?</b>
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hey @Glisten :)
Captain24	It is heavy.. I was hoping it'd be light after my day. I already knew how imperfect I am. But putting it out there has shown me that I am right. I'll snuggle pixie and be grateful that I have her. Plus a long hot shower
Glisten	I'm human. Therefore I am imperfect. I will make mistakes.
Snowie	I think you need to be kind to yourself and realise that even with our struggles that you are the best version of you. You need to show yourself compassion.
Jynx (Moderator)	Q6: Keeping some positive affirmations handy has helped. Learning to catch myself if I notice myself comparing to others, and reminding myself that I have my own story I'm writing and they don't need to be part of it. Also, talking to friends! Whenever I can feel myself being hard on myself, it helps to have someone there to reassure me

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Jupiter (PSW)	I think I can notice when I am dwelling on a mistake or imperfection, and remind myself of my competence and humanness.
TideisTurning (PSW)	@Snowie coming in with the quotables this evening!
Captain24	Also I need to be kinder to myself and stop being so hard and so black and white
TideisTurning (PSW)	Apart from usual self-care practices, some other things I can think of include doing my best to be kind to myself (the topic of next week's chat discussion as it happens!) Something else I think is important to remember here is that for every one thing you can't do, there are 10,000 things that you can. That is, I might have imperfections, but I also have strengths, and the two do not necessarily cancel each other out.
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>Q7: Alternatively, are there times where you have felt like your imperfections were a good thing? For example, how do your imperfections make you unique?</b>
Captain24	My imperfections make me who I am. There is only one of me. So therefore I am unique as I am
Snowie	I think it makes me a good mother, or at least I hope so. I try and teach my kids that their best is enough and that they are enough just the way they are. I think it comes from my childhood and not wanting to follow in my mums footsteps.
Glisten	I find beauty in imperfection. Embracing my imperfections is something that can bring out kindness in others.
Snowie	so true @Captain24 @Glisten

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Jynx (Moderator)	Q7: I think like I posted at beginning, messing up on art projects sometimes results in very ugly, very funny outcomes! And also the ADHD stuff - it comes with soooo many challenges but I wouldn't trade it even if I could, because I like how much fire, energy, passion I have and I love that I can think outside the box, and that I can often come up with ridiculous work arrounds to maximise efficiency - thereby showing myself that I'm not lazy, I'm different.
Glisten	There is nothing sadder than seeing a child anxious and distressed because they are afraid to make a mistake
TideisTurning (PSW)	Agreed @Glisten
Captain24	I really feel for kids like that @Glisten I was that child and I hate that they are made feel like that
TideisTurning (PSW)	Also true @Captain24 <3
Glisten	@Jynx, Virtual High five
Captain24	I have done a lot of things in my life that I know my mother would see as far from perfect. I can never show her the real me. I was scared to tell her about my MI because it showed her I had failed
Jynx (Moderator)	@Glisten highest of fives!
TideisTurning (PSW)	I feel like this is a constant work in progress for me, because when you've had negative correlations with imperfection, it can be harder to challenge. But, Similar to you @Jynx (Moderator) I've come to learn that my differences, imperfections, if you will, are the very things that make me me, and they're the things that make me unique. I believe, for example, that the hardships I experienced as a result of my differences have strengthened my ability to empathise with other people, not to mention it gives me a different perspective on things sometimes! Good different

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Jupiter (PSW)	<p>Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 The Beauty of Imperfection: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyKGkm78MwE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyKGkm78MwE</a></li><li>2 Taryn Brumfit- Embrace Documentary: <a href="https://www.netflix.com/au/title/80162341">https://www.netflix.com/au/title/80162341</a></li><li>3 The Imperfects Podcast- t <a href="https://theresilienceproject.com.au/at-home/podcasts/">https://theresilienceproject.com.au/at-home/podcasts/</a></li><li>4. Life is Not Perfect. Fortunately: <a href="https://www.becomingminimalist.com/imperfect/">https://www.becomingminimalist.com/imperfect/</a></li></ol>
7cough9	Thanks for resources
Captain24	Thank you for tonight. Have a good night
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>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?</b>
TideisTurning (PSW)	Great to see you @Captain24 ! Take care of yourself <3
Jupiter (PSW)	I've learned that some positives can come from your imperfections as well
Snowie	I have learnt we are all imperfect in some ways. It is not a bad thing. It is what makes us who we are and makes us all unique.
Jynx (Moderator)	To quote one of my fav characters in one of my fav shows, "Your imperfections are beautiful"
icefrog	aww i missed most of it
TideisTurning (PSW)	everyone is different, and our imperfections are what make us uniquely different <3
Glisten	Scientific discoveries are based on failure. Got to love that.

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TideisTurning (PSW)	You're welcome to jump back over to forums to continue the discussion there if you'd like :)
Jupiter (PSW)	<b>Q: Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about as we talked about our imperfections, and what we may see as an imperfection within ourselves. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do?</b>
icefrog	which of those resources would be good for imperfections in face and trauma from bullying because of it
Snowie	I'm going to snuggle in bed with a cuppa, the dog and write in my journal. Then sleep time!
Glisten	See you in the forum
TideisTurning (PSW)	Maybe try the documentary, or possibly podcast @icefrog ? That's a tough one
Jynx (Moderator)	I will be snuggling up with kitties and enjoying some video game time. Thanks everyone for your contributions tonight!
icefrog	ok thanks see u guyts
Snowie	Thanks for tonight
icefrog	guys

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Jupiter (PSW)	<p>Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. You are more than welcome to continue the discussion over on the SANE Forums if you would like here: <a href="https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Embracing-Our-Imperfections-Thursday-19th/m-p/1349137#M350007">https://saneforums.org/t5/Social-Spaces/Peer-Group-Chat-Embracing-Our-Imperfections-Thursday-19th/m-p/1349137#M350007</a></p> <p>Keep an eye out for the next Peer Group Chat discussion about 'Being Kind to Ourselves'</p> <p>If you would like to provide feedback on tonight's chat, please complete this survey: <a href="https://forms.office.com/r/XDTbQ6imNf">https://forms.office.com/r/XDTbQ6imNf</a></p>
Jupiter (PSW)	Thanks for joining tonight @icefrog :)