Case Study 1: Jane McCarthy administers first aid to save her grandson’s hand

Jane McCarthy will never forget the day she had to administer first aid to her beloved grandson to save his hand.

Four years ago, the retiree and grandmother of eight, was looking after her grandson at his family home when a dreadful accident occurred.

“I only left the dining room for a moment to grab milk from the kitchen for his breakfast, and during that time he crawled into the lounge room and tried to stand himself up using the heater. His parents usually turned off the heater as they left the house but that day it had accidently been left on,” said Jane.

After hearing his alarming screams she ran to him to find that he had severely burnt his right hand.

Jane had received basic first aid training through her son’s participation in sport and it immediately became valuable.

She took him straight to the kitchen, filled the sink half way with cold water and held her grandson’s hand in it for twenty minutes whilst she called an ambulance and his parents.

After being rushed to the local hospital, doctors initially told Jane that her grandson may need skin grafts and may not regain full motion of his hand.

Later, after a more thorough follow up, doctors told Jane that thanks to her quick first aid actions she saved her grandson’s hand. He only had to visit hospital regularly to get it dressed and, to her relief, he never lost motion in his hand.

Two years ago Jane took a first aid training course with Wollongong First Aid in order to refresh her skills.

Q: Do you think first aid training helps people in an emergency situation?

Jane: I definitely think that first aid training helps people in an emergency situation. Knowing more about first aid, having it refreshed in your mind and just overall being aware of what things can go wrong is truly an advantage. I work within the Sutherland Entertainment Centre in the kitchen and there are first aid emergencies happening all the time. People burn themselves, cut themselves and sometimes even faint so it is good to be aware of how you can help.

Q: Do you think first aid training gives people the confidence to administer first aid?

Jane: I think people who have had first aid training are more confident because they know what to do. I think that those who have had no first aid training get shocked in emergency situations and step back, which is not the best thing to do.

Q: Do you think people should have first aid training?

Jane: I think everyone should have their first aid training as there are situations that require more than basic first aid, like cardiac emergencies which require first aid techniques like DR ABC.
Case Study 2: Jamie Page comes to the aid of a collapsed diabetic man

As a gym manager at Anytime Fitness, Jamie Page has had to administer basic first aid to gym members but she has never had to call an ambulance to take a gym member to hospital before.

In early February this year, a local personal trainer asked Jamie to help him when his client, a middle-aged Type 2 diabetic man who started to go pale and vague during his training session. "We asked if he was alright by touching him on the shoulder and he came to. After I gave him some jelly beans he got his colour back and as far as I could see he seemed fine so they started training again," said Jamie.

Ten minutes later everything changed.

The diabetic man collapsed with a decreased level of consciousness, and Jamie assisted his trainer to get the man into the recovery position and called an ambulance.

As Jamie had taken first aid training only within the last year, she knew she needed to keep the man talking to keep him conscious. Along with others who had come to man’s aid, she continued to ask him questions until the ambulance arrived.

After arriving at hospital it was discovered that the man had not taken his medication for the past five days and didn’t have any food in the morning before his training.

Teamed with the stress of training he developed a low blood pressure which caused him to feel faint. Luckily for the diabetic man, his trainer knew his medical history. "I didn’t know he had diabetes so knowing a bit more history would have helped but luckily my first aid training helped me recognise that there was something wrong," said Jamie.

Q: Do you think first aid training helps people in an emergency situation?
Jamie: First aid definitely helped me in the situation I was faced with. I didn’t know he had diabetes so knowing a bit more history would have helped but luckily my first aid training helped me recognise that there was something wrong.

Q: Do you think first aid training gives people the confidence to administer first aid?
Jamie: First aid training definitely gives people confidence and helps them not to panic.

Q: Do you think people should have first aid training?
Jamie: I think people should have first aid training because it gives them the knowledge to handle an emergency situation, which could happen at any time.
Case Study 3: Joey Dawson rushes brother with concussion to hospital

Four months ago Joey Dawson had to unexpectedly rush his brother, Jack, to hospital after he suffered a concussion.

One afternoon, Joey came back from the surf with his brother and friends and they started wrestling in the back yard. A friend picked up Jack whilst they were wrestling and accidently dropped him on his head.

“My brother landed on the grass but he hit his head on a rock. As soon as it happened we stopped and asked if he was ok. He blacked out for just a second and when he came to everything seemed ok,” said Joey.

The wrestling ended there and Jack got up and went inside to take a shower without making too much of a fuss.

After he got out of the shower he had developed a bad headache and he started asking questions about what had happened. At the time no one thought too much of the slight memory loss Jack was experiencing as he had blacked out, but as the night progressed it became a concern.

“When he got up I noticed that he was slightly off balance. With the memory loss and dizziness signs I knew he had a concussion so I took him to hospital straight away,” said Joey.

As Joey had completed first aid training he knew that the accident could have potentially damaged his brother’s brain so he knew it was safer to get it checked out.

When Jack was admitted to hospital doctors gave him a CAT scan to check his brain for bleeding. The results came back fine and Jack was diagnosed as having a concussion, just as Joey had suspected.

Luckily for Jack things could have been much worse. If Joey had not realised his brother had a concussion he could have lost consciousness and collapsed, causing further injury to himself.

Q: Do you think first aid training helps people in an emergency situation?

Joey: Knowing first aid helps you in all emergency situations. It keeps you calm and gives you the knowledge to help out. It also helps because you can assess the extent of an injury and take action depending on how bad it is.

Q: Do you think first aid training gives people the confidence to administer first aid?

Jamie: First aid gives people a knowledge base to work from so if they know what is going on I think they will have more confidence to administer first aid.

Q: Do you think people should have first aid training?

Jamie: I think people should have first aid training. If everyone knows how to handle a situation properly then more lives will be saved. It is particularly vital in my work place.