

'CULT' LINK ANGERS PARENTS

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GOLD COAST parents are in shock after discovering a controversial "cult" leader was the inspiration for programs and children's books sold to them by a taxpayer-funded National Disability Insurance Scheme provider.

In a series of books authored by Gold Coast behavioural specialist Tanya Curtis, she gives credit as inspiration for work to Serge Benhayon, the leader of Universal Medicine (UniMed) determined by a NSW Supreme Court jury to be a "socially harmful cult".

Ms Curtis operates her clinic, Fabic Pty Ltd, at Carrara and regularly promotes Universal Medicine's teachings, meetings and workshops on the business website.

A number of unwitting local parents seeking help for their children, with conditions including autism and development delays, told the *Bulletin* they were unaware of the connections between UniMed and Ms Curtis when they made appointments.

A Mudgeeraba mother, who had sought the help of Ms Curtis, said she was devastated to discover her child was being treated by someone promoting UniMed.

The woman, who asked to remain anonymous, said she found Fabic through the NDIS website while looking for therapists for her daughter, who a severe development delay.

"I didn't question the reputation of Fabic because they are an NDIS provider, which would have been approved by the government," the mother said.

"It was only after I was sold books, the behavioural charts and DVDs, all of which had been paid for by the NDIS, did I start to question it."

Some parents say they have been charged hundreds of dollars for UniMed products. Fabic sells a variety of products that also have to be claimed through NDIS.

Posters, some of which include a quote from Ms Curtis or Mr Benhayon, sell for \$15 each or \$275 for a full pack.

The children's books, for \$15 each, come with a dedication to UniMed.

In one of her many book dedications to Mr Benhayon, she writes: "A big thank you goes to Serge Benhayon for showing us the way to reconnect and live in the knowing that true beauty comes from deep inside ourselves. We are deeply inspired by the work he represents through universal medicine a.k.a the Ageless Wisdom."

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CONCERNED MOTHER

In a Facebook post by Ms Curtis in October she wrote there was "nothing mysterious or unknown about the Ageless Wisdom... which we have been reminded of through the ages by an ancient lineage of philosophical teachings from greats such as Imhotep, Buddha, Plato and now Serge Benhayon".

Parents are also encouraged to download the Fabic podcasts for \$66 an episode.

A \$90 "healing" silk and flax seed shoulder wrap, developed by Mr Benhayon's wife Miranda, is among many extra products sold by Fabic.

"To later discover Tanya and Fabic actively promote their business with Universal Medicine alarmed me," the mother said. "I felt completely deceived. The professional bond of trust that should have been there was severed and I am so glad I got out of there early and wasn't subject to months of ongoing influence that may have been used to draw me toward Universal Medicine."

The mother said she

The operator of NDIS-approved Fabic Tanya Curtis, below, and main image, Serge Benhayon, the leader of Universal Medicine, which a jury determined to be a "socially harmful cult".



emailed Fabic about her concerns but did not receive a reply.

A second family was also shocked to discover the connections of what they thought to be a strictly medical provider. The mother of two boys with autism said she had been desperate to find someone to help her.

After her first sessions she was provided with a number of books and materials, only to discover up to \$900 had been deducted from her son's NDIS account.

"That is money that could have been used to treat my son. I was not aware of how much it would all cost," she said.

Both families complained to the NDIS.

The NSW Supreme Court determination came as part of a defamation case, delivered

on December 6. The jury found the group Universal Medicine to "make false claims about healing that cause harm to others", "engage in misleading conduct in promoting healing services", and to "prey on cancer patients".

Mr Benhayon, who describes himself as a "seer", was also found by a jury of four to have instructed students of a NSW Universal Medicine training workshop to "touch the genitalia of sex assault victims" and was found to "have an indecent interest in young girls".

The group has coming retreats on "the science of Divination", and teaches the philosophy of "universal wisdom" and esoteric healing.

Ms Curtis also credits her behaviour teachings, "the Body Life Skills Program", to Benhayon and UniMed and

references him in her book of the same name. She also operates a satellite Fabic office from UniMed's Fairfield headquarters.

Ms Curtis has appeared regularly on the official UniMed website, and spoken in defence of Mr Benhayon in a video posted after the Supreme Court findings.

Mr Benhayon's book, *Time, Space and All of Us*, and his other book of esoteric teachings, are sold on the Fabic website.

Despite the connections and Supreme Court decision, Fabic is still registered under NDIS, which means Ms Curtis's sessions can be paid for as part of the taxpayer-funded scheme.

In 2014 Ms Curtis won the Business Achiever Award at the Gold Coast Women in Business Awards. She has also been a finalist in the

Woman in Business of the Year category. Ms Curtis did not respond to requests for comment sent to her Fabic office and personal website.

The NDIS would not respond to questions on whether it acted on complaints or investigated Fabic's connection with UniMed. From July 1, 2018 the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission began operating in NSW and South Australia to test provider suitability but there is not yet a team for Queensland.

Instead, uninvolved families were asked to contact the NDIS directly which then refers them to the Health Ombudsman - a process that can take months. The Ombudsman is aware of allegations concerning Universal Medicine but would not release any further information about complaints.

'Demeaning' letter arrived day of her father's funeral

SOLICITORS acting for a wealthy spiritual healer who lost a defamation case against a blogger sent the woman a "demeaning" 31-page letter on the day of her father's funeral, a NSW Supreme Court

judge says. Serge Benhayon had sued Esther Mary Rockett but a jury in October found many of her posts and tweets critical of him to be true - including that he was the leader of a socially harm-

ful cult and preyed on cancer patients.

During the hearing, Mr Benhayon had claimed that people who abused their authority, such as Roman emperor Nero, dictators and cor-

rupt politicians, were reincarnated as people with autism, Down syndrome or other disabilities, but he admitted his belief was not supported by medical science. Justice Julia Lomangan yes-

terday ordered Mr Benhayon pay Ms Rockett's costs on an indemnity basis - a higher rate than usually applies in legal disputes. The case is scheduled to return to court on March 6, with the judge

asking why she should not refer Mr Benhayon's solicitors, Universal Law, to the Office of the Legal Services Commissioner for investigation over their unresponsive with the blogger.