

RAP NEWSLETTER



Volume 8

December 2010

Special points of interest:

- **RAP-I Training Day**
- **PRO Update**
- **Connectedness Research**
- **New RAP-DVD Scenarios**

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RAP-P Trial

Some recent exciting news about the RAP Parent program. Jane Pineda (clinical psychologist) ran a randomised control trial of the RAP-P Program with parents of suicidal adolescents in the Western Sydney area. These families were given routine care only (treatment -as-usual) or routine care plus family intervention. The family intervention consisted of an interactive parent educational program over 4 sessions. The first session aimed to enhance parents' understanding of youth suicidal behaviour and practical strategies to address this. The last three sessions consisted of the **RAP-P Program**. Compared to the control group, parents who received RAP-P reported a **significant reduction** in their adolescents' **suicidal behaviour, psychiatric disability, depression and hopelessness**.

Results also reflected **reduced parental negative expressed emotion** and **improvement in family functioning** in the RAP-P group, compared with those in the control group.

Parents reported that the resilience building approach of RAP-P was very helpful in getting them "unstuck" and allowed them to engage in positive problem solving. They said that they would strongly recommend this to other families.

This is an exciting new development which provides evidence for utilising a strengths-based and family-focused approach to effectively prevent and treat youth suicidal behaviour.

These types of systemic interventions might seem to be more resource-intensive but can have lasting positive outcomes hence, should be encouraged.

(Pineda, J. 2010)

NEW & UPDATED RAP DVD

Now Available!

RAP Supplementary DVD with NEW scenarios!

Supplement to Manual included

Only \$13 (Includes P&H)

See www.rap.qut.edu.au
to order DVD

RAP-I Training Day

YOU ARE INVITED!

The RAP Office is offering specialised training in the **Resourceful Indigenous Parent Program**. We invite all **accredited RAP-P facilitators** to participate in this training.

Where: QUT Kelvin Grove Campus, Brisbane

When: Friday the 20th of May 2011

Time: 9am to 1pm

This Training will accredit participants to run the Resourceful Indigenous Parent Program.

Please go to our website www.rap.qut.edu.au for Training Registration

Be Quick to register your interest.

This special training is limited to 10 places.

Connectedness

Recent Research on School connectedness; “the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the school social environment” has highlighted the strong relationship between school connectedness and emotional wellbeing.

Have a look at the poster **(on page 5)** we presented at a recent conference in Zambia which outlines the results of four recent studies on connectedness.

RAP-T resources have been designed to help teachers promote school connectedness. These resources are currently available from the RAP Office:

RAP-T Group Leaders Manual & Supplementary CD \$66

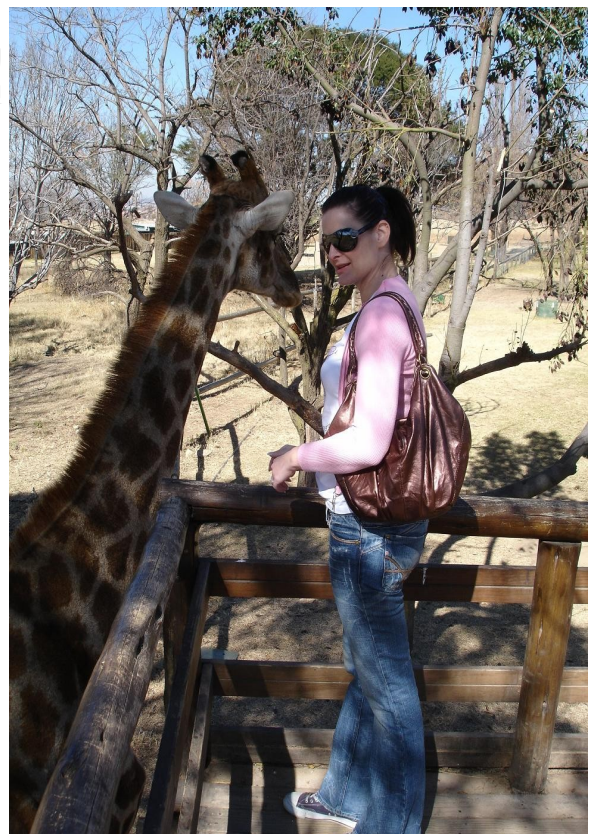
RAP-T Resource Manual \$60

RAP-T Participant Workbook \$16.50

RAP-T Refresher Participant Workbook \$12

Welcome new RAP Trainer!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome Janine Shamos to the RAP training team. Janine has been implementing RAP in **South African** schools and has now joined our training team.



Promoting Resilient Officers (PRO) program (see March 2010 newsletter) has been going very well this year. The 7 session program, adapted from the RAP and PAR programs has been delivered to police recruits in the Queensland Police Service (QPS) since July 2009.

Feedback from the program has been positive with officers saying things like,

- “I would note it as the most important and practical part of the (recruit training) program. Due to it’s emphasis on maintaining personal well being.”
- “Highly recommended, it’s helped me on the road to become a better person.”
- “The most professional/helpful/well organised program we as recruits have gone through so far. Very beneficial to your personal well being. So glad I could be a part of it.”

Quantitative data relating to the officers’ psychological well being, mental health symptoms and organisational functioning is currently being analysed.

In addition to the 7 face-to-face sessions, we have been very busy

creating, writing and developing **two online refreshers**. This is a very exciting part of the project as online delivery is the new ‘buzzword’ because of its ability to reach many people and many regional and remote areas.

The officers are sent a link to a website where they access the 10 – 15 minute interactive refresher, focusing on stress management, helpful self talk and communicating effectively. The interactive activities include, ‘drag and drop’ activities, and typing in their own responses, in addition to many other engaging actions.



We have had 85% of the officers accessing the online refresher and qualitative feedback has been positive. Officers are saying they particularly like the interactive nature.

While the online refreshers are only available to the QPS officers at the moment, it is an exciting step forward to making resilience programs accessible to a wide range of people in different situations.

Dr Colette Roos

Poster presentation in Zambia

The Life Span Importance of Connectedness to an Institutional Context (Such as School or Work) for Psychological Wellbeing: Synthesising the Results of Four New Studies

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Definition of School Connectedness

"The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school and classroom"
(Goodenow, 1993)



Some examples from the PSSM - Psychological Sense of School Membership (Goodenow, 1993)

- I feel like a real part of this school.
- People here notice when I'm good at something.
- Most teachers at this school are interested in me.
- I am treated with as much respect as other students.
- There's at least one teacher or other adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.



Prior Research

Extensive research has demonstrated links between school connectedness and:

- Academic outcomes
- Health-risk behaviour
- Delinquency
- Violence
- Markers of psychological well-being; and
- Mental Health Symptoms

See: Anderman & Freeman, 2004; Furlong et al., 2003; Goodenow, 1993; Hagborg, 1994; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997; Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming & Hawkins, 2004; Resnick et al., 1997 and Kirby, 2001

There have been a Series of Studies Looking at the Impact of Connectedness on Mental Health and Wellbeing

Study One

Shochet I.M., Dadds M.R., Ham D. & Montague R. (2006) School Connectedness Is an Underemphasized Parameter in Adolescent Mental Health: Results of a Community Prediction Study, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 35 (2), 170-179

Aim: Investigate prospective link between School Connectedness and Mental Health Problems.

Method: 2 022, 12-14 yr old students from 14 schools, were measured at two points on school connectedness and mental health symptoms.

Results:

	PSSM	CDI	SDQ	SCAS
PSSM	1	-.67	-.60	-.34
CDI		1	.74	.52
SDQ			1	.54
SCAS				1

PSSM: Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale
CDI: Children's Depression Inventory
SDQ: Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire
SCAS: Spence's Children's Anxiety Scale

School connectedness predicted future depressive symptoms, after controlling for pre-existing depressive symptoms, whereas, depressive symptoms did not significantly predict future school connectedness.

Therefore; school connectedness is a particularly strong predictor of future depression.

Study Three

Ross, A.G., Shochet I.M., & Bellair, R. (2010) The Role of Social Skills and School in Preadolescent Depressive Symptoms, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 39 (2), 269-275

Aims:

- Investigate whether school connectedness is as important in preadolescents as in adolescents.
- Investigate whether school connectedness mediates more distal deficits in social skills in influencing depressive symptoms.

Method: 127 6th & 7th grade students were measured using the Children's Depression Inventory, the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale & the Children's Self-Report Social Skills Scale.

Results:

School connectedness and social skills accounted for 44% and 26% of variance in depressive symptoms respectively and 49% in a combined model. Although the full mediation model hypothesis was not supported, school connectedness partially mediated the link between social skills and preadolescent depressive symptoms.

Thus, school connectedness appears to play as strong a role in depressive symptoms in this younger preadolescent age group.

Study Two

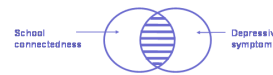
Shochet, I.M., Homel, R., Cockshaw, W.D & Montgomery, D.T. (2008) How do school connectedness and attachment to parents interrelate in predicting adolescent depressive symptoms? *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 37(3), 676-681

Aim: Investigate how School Connectedness and Parental Attachment interact in predicting depressive symptoms.

Method: 153 secondary school students were assessed using measures of parental attachment, school connectedness and depressive symptoms.

Results:

49% co-variation between school connectedness & depressive symptoms.



Compared to 28% co-variation between parent attachment & depressive symptoms.



Independently parental attachment and school connectedness accounted for 28% & 49% of the variance in depressive symptoms respectively, whereas collectively they accounted for 53% of the variance. School connectedness only partially mediated the relationship between parental attachment and depressive symptoms, and there was no significant moderation effect.

School Connectedness is the most proximal predictor of depression symptoms in teenagers.

Study Four

Cockshaw, Wendell D. and Shochet, Ian M. (2007) Organisational Connectedness and Wellbeing. In *Proceedings 42nd Annual Australian Psychological Society Conference 2007*, pages pp. 83-87, Brisbane

Aim: To adapt Goodenow's PSSM (1993) to develop the PSOM and to investigate the relationship of PSOM scores to measures of psychological wellbeing in an adult population.

Method: 125 employees from a Queensland Government organisation were measured using the Psychological Sense of Organisational Membership Scale, the Affective Commitment Scale, the Life Role Salience Scale & the short form of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale.

Results:

	PSOM	Depression	Anxiety	Stress	DASS-Tot
PSOM	1	-.54	-.39	-.45	-.53
Depression		1	.59	.70	.89
Anxiety			1	.60	.80
Stress				1	.90
DASS-Tot					1

PSOM: Psychological Sense of Organisational Membership Scale (Adapted from Goodenow, 1993)
DASS-Tot: Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
p < .01 (two-tailed) for all correlations

For adults, connectedness to their workplace is a strong predictor of depressive symptoms.

Implications

- A sense of connectedness and belonging to an institutional context (school or work) appears to be a major proximal factor in depressive symptoms in preadolescents, adolescents and adults.
- This research suggests that theories that examine concepts of acceptance, rejection, relational valuing and inclusion, such as sociometer theory (Leary, 2005) and self-psychology (Kohut, 1974) might be of particular relevance to depression.

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We Want to Hear From You!!!

population group? implementation?

What ideas have you got on recruiting parents for RAP-P? What questions do you have regarding RAP?

Do you have any tips for implementing RAP? How did you get your school staff interested in RAP? We want your input for the next newsletter.

What changes have you made to RAP to suit your in "whole school" **Email us your stories!!**

