

RAP NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 1

May, 2005

Special points of interest:

- Teachers comment on RAP-T:

“it makes me feel there is a reason for being warm to students and showing an interest”

- Resource manual for Indigenous RAP-A being used in Far West NSW

- Residential RAP

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RAP-T UPDATE



As you may recall the RAP team was awarded an ARC grant to trial the RAP-T program in two schools in Tasmania and NSW. It has now been approximately a year since we began our trial of RAP-T. Over this year the teachers have participated in three RAP-T sessions and individual and small group consultations. These consultations have been used by teachers to explore ideas on how to implement RAP-T and promote school connectedness. One thing the staff commented on, on more than one occasion was the importance of the first session which acknowledged teachers' strengths. The staff valued the way the RAP-T program focuses on competency.

The individual consultations have been well received and considered to be “very helpful”. The teachers have indicated that it was beneficial to have somebody to debrief and discuss management strategies for their students. Small group consultations were also considered effective by the teachers as they provided a medium for them to share ideas and discuss strategies collectively.

Weekly newsletters on brightly printed paper have assisted teachers to remain focused on RAP-T and have been viewed by them as very valuable. As one teacher said; “It is great to get something in your pigeon hole that doesn't mean more work but is positive and nurturing”.

Three examples of changes that have been introduced at school include;

- Implementing monthly celebrations to recognise student's birthdays
- Focusing on developing positive relationships, e.g. positive beginnings and endings to classes, creating peer support networks and showing interest in student's interests.
- Attending student's Saturday football games as a way of showing interest and connecting.

When asked how they have benefited from the program in terms of job satisfaction one teacher stated “I don't get angry at the kids, I stay calm”, and another teacher reported “It has helped me to look at the student's point of view”.

To sum up I will leave you with the comments of one teacher who said, “it makes me feel there is a reason for being warm to students and showing an interest”

RAPteens

By Michele Belfanti

Hello to all at RAP. I thought you might be interested to hear how we have adapted RAP-A and RAP-P to better suit our service. I am the Social Worker at Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme (RFW) which is located in Manly, Sydney. We are a specialist medical and al-

“ I have found RAP to be a very useful and adaptable program”

lied health centre and we assess and treat children from 0-16 from rural areas in NSW with no cost for the treatment. Children and their families stay on campus on average for a week and usually return in 6 months for follow-up reviews this treatment continues for as long as necessary and it is not uncommon to follow a child throughout their childhood and adolescence. Common problems include behavioural difficulties (such as those found with ADHD, ODD, CD, & Autism Spectrum Disorders), depression & anxiety disorders, and learning difficulties.

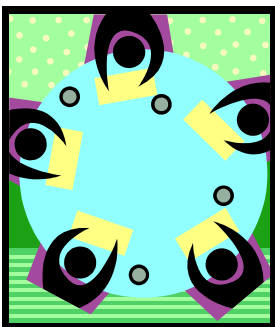
We have been running what we call RAPteens about 3 times a year since July 1999. I have adapted the RAP Program so I can run it over 5 consecutive days, with 2 sessions of about one hour each per day, culminating in a Graduation Outing of the teens choice, usually the movies and dinner. I also hold 2 Group Parent Sessions during the week and see parents individually as well. There are

usually 6 adolescents per group of a similar age, with a range from 12-15. They are tested with the CES-DC Depression Scale for Children prior to the start of the group, at the end of the week and again 6 months later when they return for a Group reunion. They also complete self-report evaluations at the end of the group and the reunion. The results have been encouraging, with the majority reducing their depression level where it had been high, and most reporting increased confidence and positivity. Most important, though, is that RAPteens encourages confidence & friendship through the group process, invaluable when dealing with kids who have major emotional and social problems and who are often loners at home.

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I have included more games and visual activities than the original RAP-A as many of our teens have learning problems and do not read. For example, to demonstrate the concept of building a strong, resilient emotional foundation/ house, the core principle of RAP-A, I get the group to build a house out of straw (small bags of craft straw), out of sticks (ice block sticks), and finally, bricks (Lego blocks). They have great fun trying to blow down each others houses and it is easier to link the message. I also use the Strength Cards

from St. Lukes, Bendigo as well as their Bear Feeling Cards to help the kids identify their strengths, express emotions and to facilitate discussion. Group jig-saws, goal-setting games and other life-skills games are also useful in increasing their confidence and encouraging group cohesion.



Most of the families who come to RFW are from disadvantaged backgrounds and there are often issues of drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence, so I have added a session on these issues and use an excellent video on marijuana and its use called Greening-Out , to start discussion.

Indigenous RAP-A in Western NSW

By
**Tracy
Robinson**

“Aboriginal Education Assistants, Consultants and community members have been involved in adapting RAP to ensure it is culturally safe and relevant to local needs”

A research project on the Resourceful Adolescent Program is currently being undertaken in western NSW in collaboration with high schools in Dubbo, Welling-ton, Bourke and Charles Sturt University. Aboriginal Education Assistants, Consultants and community members have been involved in adapting RAP to ensure it is culturally safe and relevant to local needs. They will also be involved in measuring and implementing the RAP program in Term 2, 2005. The re-search will identify the im-pact of the modified pro-gram on young people’s self talk, self concept and cop-

ing. In addition, qualita-tive data will be collected in relation to the pro-gram’s process and ef-fectiveness.

We are fortunate that the schools involved in the research have all in-cluded RAP in the PDHPE curriculum which is in line with the whole school ap-proach enshrined in pro-grams like Mind Matters. This means that all young people in Grade 7 and/or 8 at the above schools can participate in the program – even if they elect not to be in-volved in the research. We are also fortunate to have the support of the

RAP team at QUT as this has en-abled us to share their previous experience in adapting the program with Aboriginal communities. We look forward to working with teachers and education assis-tants next term. Indeed, our ability to support young people in rural areas relies on our capacity to listen and work with our Aboriginal colleagues. They have worked tire-lessly to develop local handouts and overheads and have identified a number of activities that can help build both identity and well being. We will keep you informed of our progress.

If you would like any further infor-mation please contact Tracy Rob-inson on

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Ph: 0439467984



(Continued from page 2)

I believe that residential RAPteens increases the likelihood that teens will improve their resilience as the kids are living together for a week, practising the skills they have learnt that day and reporting to the group later. There is an emphasis on the necessity of group agreement and respect as well as learning the core messages of the original RAP-A. I have found RAP to be a very useful and adaptable program and I am thrilled to have been invited to give a paper on Residen-tial RAPteens at the International Associa-tion of Adolescent Health Conference in Lis-bon in May.

Welcome



We would like to welcome Elena Moody to the RAP team, Elena is the RAP administration assistant and is based at the RAP office at QUT. Among her many tasks Elena is re-sponsible for the data base and for getting those orders out to you.

WELCOME ELENA

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**Resourceful Adolescent
Program**

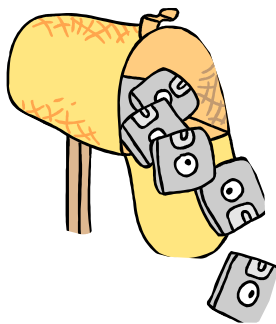
Newsletter compiled by Astrid Wurfl

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	Emile Rivet



We Want to Hear From You!!!

Do you have any
tips for imple-
menting RAP?

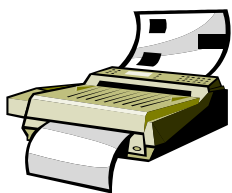
How did you get
your school staff
interested in RAP?

We want your in-
put for the next
newsletter.

What changes
have you made to
RAP to suit your
population group?

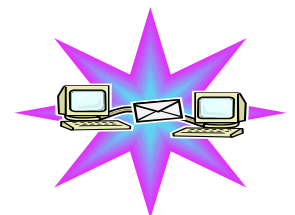
What success
have you had in
"whole school"
implementation?

Email or fax your
stories and ques-
tions.



What ideas have
you got on recruit-
ing parents for
RAP-P?

What questions do
you have regard-
ing RAP?



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