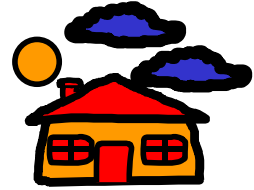


RAP NEWSLETTER

Volume 2 Issue 2

November, 2003



RAP-T and an ARC Grant

Special points of interest:

- Large ARC Grant to evaluate RAP-T
- Resource manual for Indigenous RAP-A

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Some of you may remember the article on school connectedness from the last newsletter. I am very pleased to announce that we were recently awarded a large ARC grant to evaluate RAP-T. School connectedness, where students feel included and valued by the school, is a vital protective factor for adolescent well being. This project implements a program (RAP-T) to resource year 8 and 9 teachers (in intervention and wait-list control/intervention schools in both Tasmania and Sydney) to reduce their own stress and promote school connectedness. Evaluation of effectiveness through pre-post and follow-up measures from adolescents, teachers, parents and schools on expected outcomes for adolescents of improved connectedness, well-being, conduct and mental health will provide information on this promising new approach.

Any schools in QLD interested in pursuing this program should contact Astrid at:
A.Wurfl@griffith.edu.au

Shochet I., & Wurfl A., (2003). *RAP-T: A Program for Teachers to Promote School Connectedness and Resilience in Teenagers.*©



Resource Manual for Indigenous RAP-A

"If you have experience in running RAP-A with Indigenous adolescents and haven't spoken to us about your adaptations, we would love to hear from you as soon as

In the first issue of our RAP Newsletter, we wrote about our plan to gather examples of Indigenous adaptations of RAP-A to be shared across the country. The good news is that earlier this year, we received a small grant to develop a resource manual for the adaptation and implementation of the RAP program for Indigenous adolescents.

We have spoken to people from all over Australia who

have run RAP-A with Indigenous teenagers to find out what activities worked with their participants, what didn't work and what alternative activities could be substituted. We have also spent a lot of time talking to people about the process of setting up a RAP program with Indigenous youth.

We are very grateful to all the RAPPers who have generously shared their

experience and ideas with us. Thank you also to all those who responded to our email request for information – your input and messages of support are greatly appreciated.

If you have experience in running RAP-A with Indigenous adolescents and haven't spoken to us about your adaptations, we would love to hear from you as soon as possible.



Pathways to depression among Vietnamese-Australian adolescents

Although emotional problems appear to be more prevalent among minority adolescents in the USA, the rate of depression among minority adolescents in Australia, particularly the Vietnamese, is unknown. More importantly, the predictors of their depression remain hidden to the Australian practitioners and researchers. I conducted two studies (under the supervision of Ian Shochet and David Shum) investigating the incidence of depression among Vietnamese-Australian adolescents and the psychosocial predictors of their depression. The rate of depression in the Vietnamese sample (20%) was far higher than the rate of depression in the standardized sample. We found two independent pathways to depression. (1) Family conflict resolution styles and family conflict that reflect cultural differences significantly predicted family cohesion which in turn, predicted depression. (2) Vietnamese adolescents who experienced high level of discrimination and acculturative stress (stress from adapting to a new culture) and do not have a sense of belonging to their school reported high levels of depression.

From these studies it would seem that Vietnamese-Australian adolescents are more at risk of being depressed than adolescents in the general population. The results also showed that their minority status has uniquely contributed to their depression. For these reasons it seems imperative that a program which pays attention to the issues faced by immigrant adolescents need to be developed.



RAP-at St Margarets

The Resourceful Adolescent program has been run for 4 consecutive years at St Margaret's Anglican Girl's School. It is run for all the year 8's of that year. Form groups are divided into 2 smaller groups (about 12 students) and the leaders are either their Form Teacher or another RAP-trained staff member.

Over this time, there have been numerous modifications to the program, (while still maintaining the program's integrity). It is now run in a block session over 2 to 3 mornings of one week, rather than on a weekly basis. Role-plays and case scenarios are adapted to match the issues that particular cohort may be facing and the sessions are not necessarily done in the same order as in the manual.

Apart from 'just' being a solid program, what makes RAP work so well in our school, in my opinion, is the delivery. It is all about the relationship the facilitator has with the students, the level of safety to discuss 'tricky' issues and the girls making a connection with someone who is caring and concerned and also available to them after the program has ended. (This person is often the student's Form Teacher.) To encourage this positive energy within the groups, time is spent in 'nurturing' staff members who will be involved in the running of RAP. A special focus afternoon (release time is given to the teachers) is arranged for the leaders to get together and focus on just how important it is to be teaching our students these skills (session is run by myself in conjunction with the Year Level Supervisor). Staff who have run the program previously are invited to share with the newly trained leaders some of the things that the feedback indicated to be a particular strength for them. (e.g. One teacher has a great way of telling the 3 Little Pigs story and has us all in stitches). A particularly delicious afternoon tea is provided and it is made to be a positive experience, for all involved. (Only the 'best' teachers are hand-selected for this program, as we remind them on this afternoon!).

Support is available to staff, during the week and after the last session, lunch and an informal debrief, and as much positive feedback as possible is provided. Staff have commented on what a positive experience this has been for them, which I have no doubt has a positive influence on the girls in their group. Schools can be such busy places, and with so much on the go, it may be easy for a busy teacher to see RAP as 'just more work for them to try to fit in'. This 'nurturing' of staff technique appears to make a positive difference to the staff, who in turn approach RAP in a fresher, more positive way and succeed in really 'making a difference' to the girls in their group.



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5 Nov 2003



Resourceful Adolescent Programs

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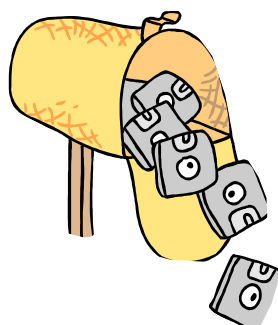
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We Want to Hear From You!!!

Do you have any tips for implementing RAP?

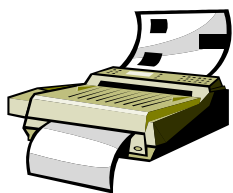
How did you get your school staff interested in RAP?

We want your input for the next newsletter.

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

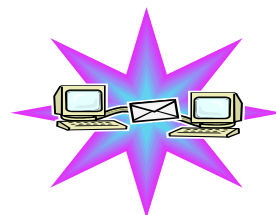
What success have you had in "whole school" implementation?

Email or fax your stories and questions.



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

What questions do you have regarding RAP?



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