

The background of the entire cover is a photograph of two young women with long hair, laughing and looking down. The woman on the left has dark hair and is wearing a red top. The woman on the right has blonde hair and is wearing a white shirt and blue jeans.

youthwise

Spring 2023

In this issue

Australians Together

FEATURED

All Together Now

FEATURED

*Tradeswoman
Australia*

FEATURED

SMG Ministries

Also in this issue

The National Student
Wellbeing Program

ISSN 2209-9565



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Discover more about our innovative youth programs at www.ovp.org.au

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A letter from the Editor

Although published bi-annually, it always seems like just yesterday since the last edition of Youthwise rolled out!

As a teenager, I always felt that time passed by too slowly. I wanted to be older, with all the freedom ,opportunities and autonomy I thought that would afford me. Time could not march on quick enough!

As an adult, I am reminded daily just how quickly time DOES go by, and the older I become, the more aware I am of the aforementioned! It sometimes is a frightening concept, and the old adage” Seize the day” becomes more pertinent! I always look back at my own teenage years with relative fondness-I am sure there was an element of teenage angst interspersed through those years, but on the whole, they were exciting and carefree years. But as I have said before, I did not experience the kind of challenges today’s youth face.

As a mother of children a generation apart in

age, I have watched those challenges escalate. Statistically, 40% of young Australians have experienced mental illness-we need to do more.

Imagine there was an illness that struck 2 out of 5 young people In Australia-that many of those young people were unable to go to school, form friendships or take part in important teenage milestones. And many were so ill that they desperately needed medical help but were unable to get it. We do not have to imagine-this is the reality facing young Australians right now.

We know that the transition from childhood to adulthood is the “peak” period for the emergence of mental ill-health and the persistence of mental disorders of adult life. This means that mental illness has become the NO 1 chronic illness throughout life.

As the saying goes,’ Our children are our future”. We need to do more NOW.

As always, thank you to all the wonderful, passionate and educative people who support Youthwise and youth mental health, and who pen and supply such educative and informative content. I continue to learn from you all, and it is my wish that our youth do too!

We all at Youthwise wish you “Good Mental Health”

Blessings,

Leigh Mary Leonard
Editor
Youthwise

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The Ability to Dance

The ability to dance is often seen as a talent or skill that many young ballerinas have tried to master since their early years.

In reality, dance is simply the connection between music and movement. Something that everyone should have access to. It benefits young and old, healthy and ill, professional dancers and non-professionals. It offers a range of physical benefits, from boosting cardiovascular health by elevating the heart rate, enhancing flexibility and balance through various stretches and reducing the risk of injury by improving coordination and muscle tone. Dance in any style, place or moment is more than just graceful moves; it's a dynamic way to improve your physical well-being and overall health.

Beyond the physical lies something deeper: the connection with the self and socio-emotional benefits of dance. Dance carries significant implications for adolescents navigating the tumultuous waters of mental health challenges. And for many, dance has been the way to navigate these difficult times and feelings. In the context of the rollercoaster of emotions that typify teenage life, dance is a therapeutic outlet, fostering resilience, emotional expression, and self-discovery.

Consider the story of Lily*, who found refuge from anxiety through dance. Her journey transformed the dance floor into a sanctuary where anxiety yielded to exhilaration. Originally unable to stand confidently, over time, dance allowed her to channel her anxiety into passionate energy until she stepped out on stage with presence, poise, and confidence. Able to sing, dance and perform in a crowded auditorium. Today, she is a mentor in dance education, guiding others towards self-assuredness and empowerment.

For Alex, experiencing his parents' divorce sent

him into a deep depression and anger. He struggled academically but, through dance, could channel his frustration and find a place to focus. For him, mastering complex dance routines fostered a sense of accomplishment that combatted his challenges at school. Dance catalysed self-discovery, replacing negative self-perceptions with a newfound sense of self-worth. In Alex's story, he eventually worked up to a world championship title, finding contentment and the deepest friendships he could imagine.

In a world where words often fall short, dance is a means of expressing complex emotions. It provides a canvas for joy, sorrow, anger, and hope to intertwine, allowing individuals to convey sentiments they may struggle to verbalise. For adolescents contending with articulating their innermost thoughts, dance offers an alternative outlet for release and rejuvenation.

There is also the story of Gillian Lynne, who encountered significant challenges in her academic life. Concentration eluded her, and restlessness was her constant companion. Concerned about her daughter's struggles, Gillian's mother sought professional guidance, hoping for a solution. However, the doctor simply switched on the radio, leaving Gillian alone in the room, and requested her mother to watch. What unfolded was nothing short of magical – Gillian began to dance spontaneously. The doctor, keenly observing, recognised that Gillian's true vocation lay in the world of dance. With unwavering certainty, he encouraged her mother to enrol Gillian in a dance school.

Today, Gillian Lynne is a celebrated figure renowned for choreographing "Cats" and "The Phantom of the Opera."

Every dance teacher has multiple Lily, Alex and



Gillians, students that they have seen flourish due to dance. For so many individuals, dance has been the vehicle for health, strength, empowerment, emotional expression, and self-discovery. It has served as a powerful tool for navigating life's challenges, fostering resilience, and celebrating the beauty of human spirit.

Quite simply, dance is for everyone, and everyone should dance...

Marguerite Barber
Australian Dance Institute
www.australiansanceinstitute.com.au

NOURISHING MINDS EMPOWERING TEENAGE MENTAL WELLBEING THROUGH CULINARY NUTRITION EDUCATION

When teenagers are asked about food choices, the words “quick” and “tasty” will come up every time. Nutrition is way down the list of priorities when a hungry teenager wants food, even though it plays a crucial role in supporting the physical, cognitive and emotional changes that take place during adolescence. Teenagers are currently getting 41% of their energy requirements from low nutrient “discretionary” foods, and are not eating enough nutrient and fibre rich foods to fuel their body and support their mental health. Unhealthy eating patterns have been found to increase poor mental health. This link is hard to ignore as we see the rising levels of poor mental health in our teens.

Combating mental health through nutrition and cooking

The founders of Expert Eats, Jessica Malcolm, an accredited practising dietitian, and Jennifer Beachey, a culinary nutritionist, believe that empowering young people to eat well, through learning practical nutrition and cooking skills, is a positive way to combat the alarming rise of mental health issues among teenagers.

With one in seven Australian children and adolescents (ages 4-17) facing mental health issues, primarily anxiety and depression, it is vital that we empower them with knowledge and practical tools to support positive mental health. Mental health problems are among the leading causes of poor academic performance, friendship and relationship issues and substance use in teens. A poor quality diet, that is low in nutrients, has been found to increase behavioural problems, reduce the ability to cope with stressful situations, and increase the risk of poor mental health.

Expert Eats has been working with local councils, secondary schools and youth services to deliver tailored culinary nutrition programs that explore the link between mental health and nutrition and provide a range of practical cooking and nutrition workshops to empower young people to eat well.

In their roles as nutrition educators and parents of teenagers, Jennifer and Jessica recognise that mental health is influenced by a variety of factors, some of which cannot be changed. Eating habits is one area that can be changed. Their programs have been designed to guide young people to discover the world of flavours, nutrition, and cooking in a fun and socially inclusive environment while offering practical

strategies to support mental well-being.

Understanding the link between nutrition and mental health

The relationship between diet and mental health is complex. A growing body of evidence suggests that healthy dietary patterns can reduce the risk of depression by 30%. Whereas diets high in ultra-processed foods, which lack important nutrients and fibre, increase the risk of poor mental health.

Supporting young people to understand how food choices affect their mental health, especially in relation to managing moods, anxiety, and depression, is key to changing their eating behaviours. By working with young people to increase their knowledge about healthy eating behaviours, the connection between food and mood, as well as build a positive relationship with food, they can make informed choices that affect the way they feel, think and behave. Understanding the immediate benefits that come from eating well, such as improved mood, can also be a strong motivator for changing eating behaviours in teenagers.

For young people, the current Australian food environment makes it hard to escape the ‘Western’ style of eating, which includes more sugar, snack foods, takeaway foods and high-energy foods. Culinary nutrition programs can help teens navigate the complex food system by supporting the development of critical decision making skills whilst encouraging them to choose, prepare and enjoy a wide variety of tasty, nutritious foods that can be adapted to their own cultural and dietary needs.

Students who attended the Expert Eats culinary nutrition for mental wellbeing programs developed an understanding of the link between nutrition and mental health. One student commented, “I think that if you are eating a lot of empty foods, like takeaway, it isn't giving you the nutrients you need and it can affect your energy levels, make you feel tired all the time and irritated or just in a bad mood overall” and another student said, “Eating healthy affects my body image and self-esteem. Diet affects gut microbiota which majorly affects your mood”.

Food literacy skills improves eating habits of teens

Eating behaviours formed during adolescence



influence dietary habits in adulthood. Teenagers eat fewer fruit and vegetables, more convenience foods, skip meals, and explore their own ideologies related to food. Unhealthy behaviours, including overeating, not eating enough and restricted eating, often start in adolescence. The teenage years are critical to promoting positive eating patterns, nutrition, and cooking skills to prevent unhealthy behaviours.

Schools are an ideal setting for health promotion initiatives to develop healthy lifestyle behaviours among adolescents. Assistant Professor, Louise van Herwerden and her research team from Bond University, have just published a review that suggests nutrition interventions in secondary schools are effective in improving students' dietary behaviours, nutritional knowledge, and attitudes when inclusive of an educational, environmental, parent/community involvement and multimedia component (multi-component). She highlights that, “Cooking programs appear to be a great practical way to support adolescents to develop healthy eating habits, including budgeting, shopping and preparing nourishing meals and snacks”

Culinary nutrition programs have been found to build food literacy in young people, increasing the skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food that meet the needs of young people. Having these skills promotes healthier diets through to adulthood. Helping prepare meals at home is an important way to build these skills, but where cooking skills are being lost in the home, it is essential to support young people to develop these skills in the school setting or youth services.

Expecting young people to make healthy food choices without the skills to make food taste good, and quickly, is a tall order. If we empower them to enjoy quick, easy, and tasty meals that include a wide variety of nutritious foods, such as fruit and vegetables, legumes, whole grains, lean meats and dairy, we will set them up for a healthy, happy future.

Written by Jessica Malcolm, Accredited Practising Dietitian www.experteats.com.au

Australians Together: nurturing wellbeing and unity in classrooms

For many indigenous peoples across the globe, connection to culture leads to better physical health, and social and emotional wellbeing, and reduces risk-taking behaviours. This is one reason why learning about First Nations histories, cultures and perspectives in Australian classrooms is so important. It helps to engage First Nations students in learning, and improves academic outcomes, while boosting personal cultural identity. It gives First Nations students the positive cultural acknowledgement they need to flourish.

When researchers asked hundreds of Western Australian children about what makes it easier for them to achieve wellbeing, they uncovered some fascinating results. While non-Indigenous children want to feel valued and appreciated on a personal level, for First Nations children wellbeing comes from having “a strong culture; fighting for your culture”. First Nations children expressed the need for culture to be acknowledged and respected by their peers and by adults and the broader community too.

This learning has value for everyone. When all students, no matter their background, recognise, engage in, and build respect for the world’s oldest continuous living cultures, it creates a friendlier and more inclusive school environment, helping to address racism and increase feelings of belonging for First Nations students. Learning about this continent and its First Nations Peoples can add to students’ positive self-identity, and emotional connections to place help build a sense of community and desire to be involved.

For non-Indigenous students, understanding the truth of our shared history allows them to build empathy for First Nations Peoples. And empathy benefits everyone. In fact, evidence shows when students learn about the experiences of one minority, their empathy for all minorities increases.

“I felt like I got quite emotional when I was listening to the stories ... of people being taken away at very young ages.” Middle School Student

However, many teachers feel ill-equipped when it comes to teaching the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cross-curriculum priority. That’s why

organisations like Australians Together exist – to empower teachers to embed First Nations perspectives with confidence (AITSL Standard 2.4). Australians Together curriculum resources are developed alongside First Nations educators to ensure they’re authentic and culturally responsive (AITSL Standard 1.4). Importantly, they save teachers precious time in lesson planning – time they desperately need.

Teachers who’ve used these resources are feeling the benefits.

“As a teacher it has made me see actually how easy it can be to make really strong, important links in the curriculum. In this instance knowledge is power.

The more you know, the more you’re able to teach.” Laura Logan, Year 5 Classroom Teacher

Effective professional development increases teacher job satisfaction and lowers stress, and Australians Together has just that outcome:

“... there has been a significant increase in their [the teachers’] ability and their confidence to be able to implement this curriculum in a meaningful way.” Melissa Clifton, Assistant Head of Junior School

Students who’ve learnt through Australians Together resources describe significant changes in their attitudes. “It has made me think a lot differently about what they’ve been through, Aboriginal people, and what they’re still going through.” Year 12 Student

And for some students, it’s sparked a personal interest in cultural identity, fostering pride, self-esteem, and a teacher’s ultimate dream – a desire to learn more. “On my Dad’s side, we do have Indigenous heritage, and it’s making me, like, proud of what I have in me. It’s like stirred something up in me and I want to know more.” Year 12 Student

To learn more about Australians Together, visit: <https://australianstogether.org.au/>

Building great careers in trades for women.

Tradeswomen Australia (TWA) is working to support more girls, women and non-binary into trades and ensure they safe, secure and confident to pursue the career of their choice. With the National Skills Needs List (2022) showing 101 trades and skills experiencing shortages it is a great time for women to move into jobs traditionally classed as male-dominated. Great careers in trades suit those who enjoy being active, like to solve problems, learn best by doing and who are looking for a secure, yet very portable, national qualification.

Often, girl and non-binary students are not exposed to trade careers due to lack of resources, cultural expectations, low parental engagement, and gender biases. Trade careers are rarely presented to girls as a realistic career option – regardless of their interest, capability, or suitability.

In a trades work place the entrenched lack of gender equity and equality has been exacerbated by persistent gender segregation of the Australian workforce. In the Australian construction only 2% of the trades workforce is female. Our research with Career Advisors has shown that “(trades are)... seen as a male domain, they (girls) count themselves out before they give it a chance” [1]

Women entering trades which have traditionally been done by men, sometimes suffer from disadvantage and face impediments such as:

1. Sexist behaviour
2. Discrimination from their employers and/or male colleagues
3. A lack of facilities for their health and safety such as properly equipped toilets and women only changing rooms
4. A gap in daily support or long-term career mentoring from management and colleagues of either gender.

Tradeswomen Australia is working to increase the number of women in trades with a holistic industry approach. We offer active support resulting in increased resilience and confidence for girls, women, and non-binary to freely investigate and pursue the trade careers of their choice. We have built a community of tradeswomen who act as role models at our hands-on workshops so attendees can meet women working successfully in trades. We partner with qualified employers who provide safe workplaces for apprentice tradeswomen, demonstrated by their commitment to establishing policies and procedures encouraging diversity and inclusion for everyone.

We offer Workplace Audits and Workplace Readiness training for organisations and employers embracing essential culture change. This can include Bystander Action, Unconscious Bias, Inclusive Learning/Work Environments and Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing training sessions. Our unique groundbreaking Workplace Diversity Project, supported by Victoria’s Worksafe Workwell Mental Health Improvement Fund, which included our diversity and inclusion training, saw automotive

worker mental health improve by 10%.

TWA’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion is key to creating workplaces which are safe for everyone. Increasing tradeswomen in the workforce unlocks the potential to reduce skills shortages, improve equity and equality in workplaces, remove outdated gender biases and boost our economy.

To find out more about Tradeswomen Australia and the services, training, information, and support offered to employers, careers advisors and future tradeswomen go to www.tradeswomenaus.com. Careers Advisors and students can explore trades and their industries and find interviews with tradeswomen on the site. Additional information about TWA consulting, mentoring, recruitment, and training services designed to support women and create safe workplaces are also available. Email info@twaus.com.au with any specific enquiry.

Images: Keeley, Apprentice Aviation Mechanic, Photo: Louise Beaumont

Sources: [1] Influencer Insights: Women in male dominated trades, why is it not working?

Tradeswomen Australia Group
www.tradeswomenaus.com

Be Challenged

As adults playing a role in the lives of young people, there are many opportunities for us to foster within these young people a sense of well-being through a feeling of belonging to a group or team.

Of priority in developing the self-efficacy of young people is also the cultivation of a strengths-based approach towards our interactions with them which guides young people toward a growth mindset.

Whether we are parenting, coaching a sporting team, teaching a group of students or working with small groups of young people, the following principles can guide us to achieving the goals of connectedness, strength identification, growth orientation and strong, supportive relationships. The principles of effective team building below may be of assistance to you in your thinking around leading the groups of young people in your life.

1. Establish a clear vision accompanied by strong values

Spend time with your team discussing your mission, your vision and your reason for being. When your 'reason for being' is articulated and shared, and this sense of purpose is mirrored in the values espoused by team members, people experience greater intention in their actions. This serves to provide an anchor during times of challenge. A clear sense of vision allows your team to view future actions through the lens of the group's vision and mission, driving alignment and cohesiveness. Be prepared to take the time to revisit these values and your vision regularly and be open to suggestions from your team for tweaks and changes as time goes on. This is a healthy sign of growth and development – and a reflection of a healthy working environment.

2. Prioritise knowing each individual and learning about how their strengths can contribute to a greater whole

How well do you really know the individuals in your team? Have you prioritised learning about the background, interests, experiences and driving forces for these individuals? Building opportunities to take an authentic interest in each person can yield enormous benefits; not only as a consequence of the heightened motivation a person feels when they are 'seen', but also in terms of your improved sense of how best to use individual strengths and interests for the betterment of the group as a whole! It is equally as valuable for individuals to 'see' you as a whole person and not just the role you perform with this group.

3. Create a culture that is open to feedback and different perspectives

It can sometimes be challenging and confronting to receive feedback. As a leader, your first instinct may lean towards a resistance to feedback



and to a minimisation of opportunities for people to provide this feedback. New leaders, in particular, may worry that any negative feedback is a reflection of the success of their leadership. The reality is that normalising feedback, and the constructive delivery of it, is essential for the success of any team. The strength of a leader lies in their capacity for openness to feedback and their modelling of the receiving of it with discernment and appreciation. Creating regular opportunities for open evaluation of practices allows those in groups around you to feel an authentic sense of agency.

4. Be a role model for energetic, enthusiastic and joyous interactions

We all know that energy is infectious. The energy you bring to your roles working with groups has a significant effect on the climate of an environment and on the well-being of your team as a whole. At Be Challenged, one of our core values is to 'be playful'. We deliberately prioritise this value because we recognise that playfulness drives joy and happiness, with the delightful by-product of increased creativity and synergy. When they are given the freedom to think differently, tangentially and laterally for a short period of time, people can reboot and reset their thinking.

5. Be prepared to delegate and to recognise the capacity for growth of the members of your team

Experienced leaders know the challenges, as well as the benefits, of learning the skill of delegation. Delegating effectively can be one of the most challenging skills to learn, but the benefits to a leader and to individuals in a group are significant. Just as teachers are aware of the benefits of challenging their students to move to new levels of understanding and performance, so too it is our responsibility to allow team members in other contexts to be challenged and to demonstrate their capabilities. Consider whether your fears are resulting in the



controlling of too many elements around you. Is there the chance that this feels stifling for those young people who work alongside you?

6. Take time out to prioritise the celebration of 'wins'

Educators are aware of the significance of celebrating a range of 'wins' for their students. The impact on their sense of self-efficacy and their motivation cannot be underestimated. In our society, we have ritualised this acknowledgement of our students in many ways, from merit awards to Speech Nights. Sadly, as leaders, we can forget the impact and significance of pausing to recognise successes in other group contexts. The relentlessness of routine, and the perpetual challenges it throws at us, can seem overwhelming unless this cycle is punctuated by acknowledgements of success. You might like to consider scheduling the sending of an email or the writing of a note each Friday afternoon, acknowledging someone's commendable actions? A small action showing that an individual has been seen and acknowledged has a large and lasting impact on an individual.

7. Prioritise personal growth and learning

Taking time to read and learn about different ways of thinking, theories, ideas and concepts is a powerful way that you can prioritise your well-being and the well-being of others. Focussing on team dynamics with the goal of building cohesiveness, driving belonging and modelling personal growth is an important means through which you can build individual

and team capacity and synergy moving forward.

At Be Challenged, we would be delighted to partner with you and your organisation in the delivery of programs for teams of young people or adults to achieve the objectives that have been explored in this article. We are experts in the facilitation of programs that drive collaboration, communication and different ways of thinking; all the while guiding participants to a greater awareness of their personal strengths and their incredible capacity.

For more information, please contact Lisa Kelliher - lisa@bechallenged.com.au

*Head of People & Culture and Educational Consultant
Be Challenged
www.bechallenged.com.au*



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Uncovering strengths while connecting to community

According to an 18,800-person survey conducted in 2022 by Mission Australia, only half of teens aged 15 to 19 are positive about their future. More than half of the teenage respondents said the environment and climate change were among their top concerns.

With increasing inflation and housing costs, fewer job prospects, the prospect of leaving regional towns to find work and study, and issues like climate change and social inclusion, is it any wonder positivity is thin on the ground?

One not-for-profit from Sydney, Girls on Fire, is looking to inject some much need hope into the lives of girls and other marginalised teens through fire and disaster management programs.

Girls on Fire works closely with emergency service organisations to provide practical, hands on programs that give marginalised youth the opportunity to learn firefighting, flood and disaster management skills in one- and two-day, virtual, and residential camp format.

What began with a desire to raise the number of girls considering a career as a firefighter and/or in emergency services has grown to include culturally specific programs that promote Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

"When I was a kid trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, there was nothing like this," says Bronnie Mackintosh, founder of Girls on Fire explained, "I didn't even contemplate a career in emergency services until I was well into my working career."

Young people learn what it's like to prevent,

prepare for, manage and recover from fires, floods and other disaster scenarios. Kitted out in firefighter uniforms, the participants learn how to put out fires with hand tools, use truck hoses, challenge their physical fitness, extract a person in a car accident simulation, and learn the value of teamwork.

But the benefits are not only vocational, or community orientated.

Each program is carefully designed to instil courage, resilience, and uncover the inner strengths for each individual participant. They also address many of the common fears facing teenagers today, such as meaningful employment, community connection, action on climate, and provide purpose while doing so.

Young people that may not have found their feet in a classroom or on the sporting field are uncovering they have the stamina to face challenges and the ability to solve problems. The creative thinkers, the ones that know how to connect the team, the nurturers, the scientists and the insatiably curious, all contribute in a meaningful way.

Each participant gets a taste of what it's like to be a part of a supportive community of people brought together from a multitude of backgrounds and cultures with a shared goal – to help other people. The Girls on Fire approach is to show women, Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ leadership to girls, First Nations and LGBTQIA+ teens at program level. For kids that have not connected to their community in a meaningful way previously, the Girls on Fire programs can foster a sense of belonging and help increase the visibility of positive, proactive role models.

"We design every program to ensure that not only are kids learning skills and what they can do on the day, they can visualise themselves in the future. By having women, First Nations and LGBTQIA+ fire and rescue agency staff and volunteers delivering the programs, the participants can see the potential, ask the questions and feel connected to something bigger than themselves. That's really powerful for young people, especially if they've already faced bullying, racism, homophobia and/or rejection for simply being themselves," explained Bronnie Mackintosh.

Previous programs have focussed on the state of New South Wales, but pilot programs will take place in Queensland, Victoria and beyond in 2023.

The practical, vocation oriented nature of their fire and emergency service programs saw Girls on Fire complete a 20-town roadshow in New South Wales as part of a joint RIEP and NSW Department of Education initiative in 2022. But the programs also have wider appeal. Interested local councils looking to increase bushfire and disaster management skills, independent schools looking to increase school leaver options, and all kinds of organisations seeking disaster recovery information and strategies have reached out.

Girls on Fire aims to expand programs to include a focus on expanding the existing programs into other states, introduce further cultural inclusion programs such as a dedicated LGBTQIA+ youth program, and supporting youth mental health.

To find out more about Girls on Fire, head to www.girlsonfire.com.au



BE YOUR OWN CHAMPION

Join Youth Advance to do your Duke of Edinburgh Award

I implore all young Australians to engage in the Award. I've expanded my repertoire of expertise, facing a variety of challenges and I've improved my communication, cooperation and leadership skills. Give your students a head start in Life! Become World Ready

Learn important life skills and increase career opportunities

Get out of your comfort zone, build new relationships and learn important life skills. Come bush with us and expand your horizons – Be Your Own Champion – Become World Ready.

YouthAdvance are proud to be able to deliver The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, the world's leading youth development achievement program. We recognise that young people need a platform to shine and a pathway to do this, and offer to assist students in their Award. We also help schools that want to offer this amazing program to their students, but don't have the resources to do so.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is the worlds leading youth development achievement program. It is aimed at young people between 14-25, is internationally recognised and can provide advanced opportunities for employment and education.

Even more than that, by creating opportunities for young people to develop skills, get physically active, give service and experience adventure, the Award can play a critical role in their development. It is an amazing way to gain recognition for the activities that they are already doing, or to start a new activity.

Each participant chooses the activities that suits their passion and they have the freedom to move through each Award level at their own pace. In completing the Duke of Ed Award, participants:

- Learn important lifeskills and increase career opportunities
- Are equipped and empowered to take on life beyond school and university
- Can have advanced opportunity with university admission and points
- Become more well-rounded, driven and confident young people

YouthAdvance offers the opportunity for young

people to complete the Award in two different ways. If your school/local community centre doesn't offer the Award, you can join us as part of the Open Award Centre. Or, if your school wants to look at offering the Award (but without any of the administration work), they can become a School Partner, which means you can complete the Award with your school peers.

You can check out more about the Duke of Ed Award here: <https://youtu.be/NSfhCnnAjw4>

The Award is open to all Australians and therefore all States and Territories have state funding that is available to assist in the costs of this program. We look forward to helping you with your Award!



Braving Leadership

Training and Mentoring your Student Leaders

LEADERSHIP IS A RESPONSIBILITY NOT JUST A TITLE

Student leaders that have been chosen to lead are all too often throwing their hands in the air as they struggle to gain the following of their peers while encouraging a more inclusive and respectful culture. Knowing all too well that many students are masking their struggle of social pressure, bad behaviour and poor mental health. Unfortunately many do not feel safe to speak up, and all too often witness, or fall victim to such behaviour, without really knowing how to respond. Leaving many feeling helpless, isolated and alone.

Here is found our opportunity to train and mentor your student leaders to step up as people of influence. By understanding that the majority of students are not violent, sexist, abusive or bullies and are actually good caring people. That they are actually yearning for leadership that provides guidance to inspire safe, trusting and respectful cultures where it is normal to look after each other and hold each other to account to thrive together.

OUR STUDENTS ARE DROWNING IN INFORMATION YET STARVING FOR WISDOM

The Braving Leadership Program empowers your student leaders to build a culture of trust and respect while encouraging peer to peer support and accountability to be up-standers as people of influence. Thereby creating leadership through prevention by "stopping it at the start".

By making it OK and normal for peers to tap each other on the shoulder and say, "Hey I Respect you...but...you are better than that" or "We talked about this..." or simply, "RUOK?".

Workshop participants will work together to

inspire and engage "the standard you walk past is the standard you accept" culture. Examples of critical issues that groups may be calling each other to action could be (depending on age) violence in the community, offensive language, sexual harassment, mental health, bullying, objectification, gender stereo types, digital disrespect, consent, racism, abuse, sexual assault, mentoring etc....

Braving Leadership Program includes a one day workshop for your student leaders which is followed up by momentum sessions, student/ staff/parent talks and mentoring/coaching as required over a 12 month period.

*"Mark's **Braving Leadership Program** has been exceptionally well received by our senior student leadership team. Some, in fact, have described it as 'life changing.'* The program is unlike other student leadership programs in that it directly addresses some of the issues that our young people find the most difficult, for example holding their peers to account. The program is a mix of mentoring and capacity building to help young leaders develop the skills to build a culture where students not only look out for each other but also develop the courage to call a peer out in a respectful way. Respectful interactions in every context are a key principle of the program. Mark's program is intentional, relevant and effective."

Claire Melloy - Assistant Principal - Radford College - Canberra

MARK WADIE - 15 YEARS OF BRAVING LEADERSHIP AT I RESPECT

Following on from the success of Mark's first book How a Boy Becomes a Man - Planning a Rite of Passage to Manhood, running countless Braving Leadership Programs in schools around

Australia, rites of passage programs, mentoring and coaching, Mark shares a common wisdom that has been around since the dawn of time.

For over 40,000 years men and women across the globe have been sitting in circles to listen, support, share, check in and step up into personal and collective responsibility. Ensuring the sustainability of families, clans and cultures by working together in a space of trust, respect and equality.

Reminding us all that leadership is a decision and not a position. With that decision then comes the great responsibility and opportunity to create safe spaces for the people we serve to thrive through peer to peer support and accountability.

Mark believes that society is now ready and asking to move from awareness into responsibility through proactive leadership within the school community. As evidenced with incredible media support, having Mark being showcased on Channel 9, Win and ABC news, regular features on ABC radio, The Canberra Times and featured in the national gender violence prevention campaign 'Stop it at the Start.'

For more information get in touch with Mark Wadie at I Respect

www.markwadie.com
mark@markwadie.com
0437850462



Fostering Creative Futures:

Empowering Secondary School Students through Vocational Training in the Creative Arts Industries

Secondary school is a pivotal period in a young person's life, marked by self-discovery, educational pursuits, and aspirations for the future. Unfortunately, the creative arts often get overlooked in mainstream education due to years of funding policies that prioritise other fields. However, Collarts is different.

At Collarts, our focus is on vocational training in the creative arts industries, nurturing future leaders in music performance, screen & media, musical theatre, and technical areas like sound production. Creative arts education is at the core of what we offer, catering to a diverse group of students.

In the wake of the pandemic, the creative industries are rebuilding, and providing secondary students with opportunities for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in these fields offers numerous benefits that extend beyond their regular educational journey. From nurturing talent and building crucial skills to fostering confidence and guiding career pathways, VET in the creative arts equips secondary students with the tools to thrive in a competitive world.

These programs allow students to explore their interests and talents while honing their skills in meaningful ways. Through structured training and mentorship, students transform their potential and curiosity into the skills used by industry professionals.

VET in the creative arts offers students lifelong skills. Traditional secondary education often prioritizes theoretical knowledge, but VET programs emphasize hands-on learning, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management. Engaging in industry-relevant projects, workshops, and collaborative experiences provides practical insights that make students job-ready or prepared for further study.

Our partner schools attest that Collarts VET courses boost students' self-esteem and confidence. They feel supported in their learning environment, enabling them to explore new ideas and take creative risks.

One significant advantage of students taking a VET course during their senior certificate years is the opportunity to gain a formal qualification, contribute to their senior certificate, and, in some states, enhance their ATAR score.



Collaborating with our partner schools, Collarts achieved a remarkable 75% completion rate for enrolments in the 2022 school year. In 2021 and 2022, several Collarts students earned perfect study scores (ATAR contribution) and received the Victorian Premier's award for VCE VET Music (Performance). This underscores the importance of VET and its positive impact on secondary education. As a dual-sector provider, Collarts uniquely offers a pathway into higher education, with a strong focus on industry connections.

The diverse nature of VET engages all types of students. Its competency-based learning structure provides a flexible mode of delivery and assessment, focused on whether students can perform tasks at a satisfactory industry level. It encourages resubmissions and further development until they achieve proficiency.

Collarts is a dual-sector education provider that partners with secondary schools nationwide to deliver vocational education and training (VET) creative arts industry qualifications at AQF levels II, III, and IV to students in years 10, 11, and 12 as part of their senior certificate.

Cherie Wright

If you're interested in offering a Collarts VET course at your school, please contact our VET team at vet.support@collarts.edu.au or call 1300 818 777.

COLLARTS

VET DELIVERED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

[VET.SUPPORT@COLLARTS.EDU.AU](mailto:vet.support@collarts.edu.au)[COLLARTS.EDU.AU/VETDSS](https://collarts.edu.au/vetdss)

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Youth Empowerment through Creative Arts Innovation

The One Vision Productions SAE Institute Scholarship that led to a Splendour In The Grass artist performance

By Brianna Pearl

One Vision Productions (OVP) educates and empowers disengaged and disadvantaged young people through evidence-based music and creative arts programs (Music for Change & MPOWER), digital mental wellness tools (MPOWER Online), innovative app technology (MPOWER App), and specialised mentoring services (OVP) that drive positive life choices and personal growth toward education and career pathways that express their fullest potential.

“...Art helps us to reconnect with our humanity. It helps us to relearn what it means to be a human being.” Luke Escombe, Artist

Music for Change programs: bridging the gap between mainstream curriculum and alternative education.



(One Vision Productions, Workshop at Clarence Valley)

Music for Change workshops combine innovative and evidenced creative arts initiatives (music, film, hip-hop dance, and rap) with the neuroscience of skill development, instilling well-being techniques and training, and education and employment skills that young people can relate to, find meaning in, and a desire to engage with. Through creativity, a new avenue is created for youth to access and pursue education and employment opportunities.

OVP are strong advocates for the expression, preservation and maintenance of Indigenous culture and art. Coedie McCarthy, AKA The Boy of Many Colours, was a Music for Change program participant, who is now well-known for his music with Indigenous hip-hop group, Indigenoise.



Indigenoise (Photo: Indigenoise.com)

After completing a Music for Change program with OVP, Coedie was accepted into OVP's SAE Institue Scholarship to complete a Certificate III in Music. The same year, Coedie was invited to play at the first (of many) Splendour In The Grass festival sets!

A couple of years later, Indigenoise produced their first album, Old Ways New Age, and were awarded #1 on the Triple J Unearthed electronic and hip-Hop charts for their debut single, Wildfire.

Indigenoise have since signed a record label and performed at the Burning Man festival in the USA, as Aboriginal cultural ambassadors, impressing international audiences with their powerful stage presence, socio-political lyrics, and musical talent!

Codie has evolved as a multidisciplinary artist, with projects spanning across music, photography, film, and design disciplines, youth workshops, and Indigenous culture and arts preservatio projects. Coedie also mentors youth, helping them to turn their creative dreams into a reality.

He says, “I am happy to go above and beyond, while helping give these young creatives the tools to shape themselves further. In a way, [I’m] giving back for the years of support I have received by [my] mentors and peers.”



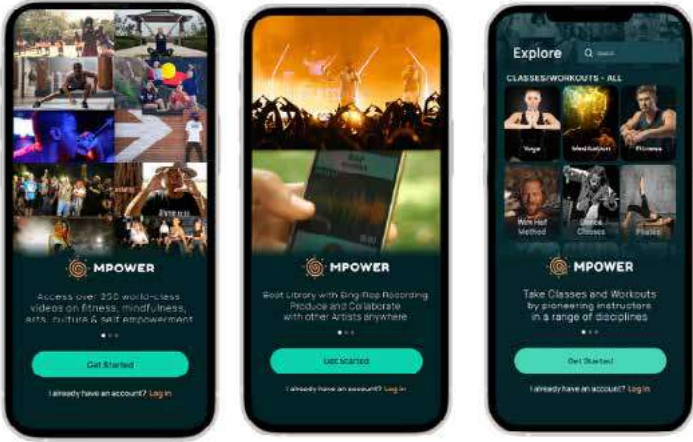
Coedie McCarthy (Photo: Tree Faerie)

Coedie's next album is due to launch in October, and One Vision Productions are due to launch the MPOWER App soon after. Coedie will feature as an ambassador on the app, offering an incredible opportunity for youth to learn from him throughout their own creative journey!

The MPOWER App: where innovation meets personal growth

The MPOWER App is Australia's largest and most progressive resource for mental health. Bringing you Indigenous wisdom, inspirational mentors, well-being specialists and some of the most creative minds from around the globe.

It provides 24/7 support and empowerment for young people in a relatable and engaging format, with over 70 positive health challenges, creative activities for emotional expression, and a real-time music Rap Recorder, to collaboratively create and share tracks within online chat and support groups.



Through OVP programs and the MPOWER App, youth gain an enhanced awareness of the importance of education, mental health and lifestyle choices, as well as information about employment and education pathways in the arts sector. Valuable connections can open with local artists, music producers and filmmakers, while youth collaboratively compose lyrical content and learn how to become music producers online and during programs.

Coedie could be your next creative mentor on the MPOWER App! Check it out www.mpower.online and @mpower.online

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3 Things You Need To Know About The National Student Wellbeing Program

And why does it matter?

In August 2022, the Albanese Government requested feedback from Australian Schools and Families regarding the relevance of the formerly known National School Chaplaincy Program (known today as the National Student Wellbeing Program or NSWSP) introduced by the Howard Government, 2007, and if the program was still a service that adds value to the lives of students, teachers, and families across our nation.

An independent review undertaken by DandoloPartners, received overwhelming responses about the program and its place in the wider school community and wellbeing space.

Over the short 10-day survey window, there were almost 12,000 submissions to the review of the program and its application to the 3,000 schools engaged in chaplaincy services each year from 2019.

The largest group of respondents of to the review were Parents and Guardians, seconded by Teachers.

The produced report acknowledged that chaplains (known as Pastoral Care Worker (PCW) in South Australia) not only provide wellbeing support directly to students, but also indirectly through supporting the school community, as well as the broader community, which contributes to student wellbeing on a macro scale.

The report also found a Chaplain simply being present, even without formal structure, has an enormous impact to students by:

- Creating safer and more supportive environments.
- Identifying and responding to issues of wellbeing early and providing swift referrals to support interventions if required.
- Empowering students by providing them with encouragement, advice, and basic wellbeing strategies.
- Building relationships with students and providing a stable, consistent adult figure or role model.
- Being available for students, acting as an approachable -go-to- person viewed as separate from school staff.

The flexible and generalised nature of the chaplain role is a key strength as it allows for an integrated and holistic approach to student wellbeing, as the school and chaplain work together and alleviated pressure on teachers and staff both with-in and outside the classroom.

Schools Ministry Group (SMG) has embraced the government's newest approach to chaplaincy services, specifically around how schools can now use their NSWSP funding to access a wider range of support in their school community within the following three key areas:



1. SA Schools can continue to access one-to-one wellbeing support from their SMG PCW.

SMGs PCWs are there to coach, support, bridge gaps and build community, and they are present in time of crisis and despair. A PCW can continue to provide wellbeing support beyond the school gate, when students and families feel they have no one else to turn to.

2. Schools can now use NSWSP to fund Seminars and Workshops.

Under the heading of Group Services, a school can use their NSWSP funding to access a vast list of Seminars and workshops. As an authorised NSWSP Provider, SMGs team cover a wide range of topics including Consent, Integrity, Friendship, Bullying, Cyber Safety, Health, and Emotions.

3. Teacher Education and Professional Development

Schools can also now use the NSWSP funding to access subsidised Education and Training for their staff through their NSWSP Provider. SMG has found that the most popular training to-date has been the Wellbeing Foundations program, and the incredibly popular Social and Emotional learning tool, Kimochis® Foundations and Advanced PD.

Although the NSWSP funding reaches across state and territory borders, as it currently stands only 1/3 of public schools can access the funding. However, schools can use their federally funded, post-pandemic Student Wellbeing Boost to access wellbeing services from SMG.

Schools Ministry Group has been supporting Student Wellbeing in SA schools for over 30 years, seeing young people and school communities discover purpose, value, and hope. Book your Student Wellbeing Discovery Session with SMG today, visit www.smg.asn.au.





The Buzz of Beekeeping: Nurturing the Next Generation for a Sustainable Future



Bees, the tiny yet mighty creatures, hold the key to our planet's biodiversity and food security. Today, we delve into the importance of nurturing young minds as future beekeepers.

Bees serve as essential pollinators, enabling the reproduction of plants including vital agricultural crops. To give you an idea of just how essential bees are, the Wheen Bee Foundation provides some astounding statistics; although "honey and other hive products generate around \$100 million per year in Australia alone, the contribution of honey bees to agriculture through pollination services is estimated to be 140 times this figure and was valued at around \$14.2 billion in Australia in 2017." That equates to 1 in 3 mouthfuls of food being dependent on bees!

Sadly though our honeybees are under constant threat from disease and pests such as Varroa mite, hive beetle and foulbrood. These adversaries can decimate bee colonies and disrupt crucial pollination cycles, endangering both bees and the ecosystems they support.

That's why beekeeping goes beyond a mere hobby; it is a profession that plays a crucial role in sustaining our natural ecosystems, as beekeepers ensure the health and well-being of bee colonies.

According to the latest Labour Market Insights, the average age of a beekeeper in Australia is 54 years old. At Backyard Honey, we're on a mission to educate and inspire the next generation of beekeepers who will be key to sustaining the industry and safeguarding a sustainable future.

Backyard Honey was born out of the recognition that many people dream of having their own beehives yet lack the time and expertise required. Through our Hive Hosting program, our expert Bee Team maintains beehives across Melbourne backyards to produce local honey for the community. Our Bee Team is primarily made up of young beekeepers who were introduced to the business through an interest in working with

nature. Whilst no formal qualification is needed to start beekeeping, working closely with a mentor, beekeeping club or completing a short course is the best way to get started—and that's before you purchase the hive.

It's always a buzz at Backyard Honey HQ. When we're not keeping bees we are busy jarring and labelling honey, selling hives and beekeeping equipment, assembling frames and boxes, planting bee friendly gardens and educating students and the community about the importance of our pollinators.

Our interactive education sessions and incursions bring the captivating world of bees directly to schools, igniting students' inspiration and equipping them with knowledge about the indispensable role bees and beekeepers play in our food security. Through immersive experiences with a live display hive and beekeeping equipment, students develop a profound appreciation for these incredible insects and the responsibility carried by beekeepers. By instilling this understanding and respect in young learners, our aim is to not only inspire future generations to embrace beekeeping, but to also embrace a strong curiosity into local food supply

The future lies in the hands of the next generation, and as we confront environmental challenges, the role of beekeepers becomes increasingly vital. By nurturing the curiosity and passion of young minds through education sessions and incursions, we possess the power to shape a generation of bee advocates, ensuring not only the welfare of bees but for our planet as a whole.

Mary Trumble/Ben Fries
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Mind, Body, Soul: My Journey towards Resilience

In a world where life often feels like a never-ending race, where the pressures keep piling up, and the chaos threatens to consume you, don't forget you have the power within to take control and live life on your terms.

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Ben, a young bloke who embarked on a path of transformation from the serene shores of a small coastal town in NSW to the forefront of a wellness revolution. As the mastermind behind Benefitlab Health and Wellness, I have a story, which is still being written as we speak, but is living proof to the profound impact of mindset, mindfulness, and movement on our lives.

Imagine a childhood surrounded by the smooth ocean air and the beat of crashing waves—a childhood that I knew all too well. I grew up soaking in the joys of mateship, chasing after the footy, and mucking around at the beach, that made the hours slip away like sand through fingers. But this wasn't just about physical activity; it was the foundation of my guiding principle—physical health is the key that unlocked the door to a more enriching life.

As the years went by, my passion for wellness led me down various paths, from chasing footys around an oval to empowering others in achieving their physical best as a personal trainer. It was a journey marked by dedication, discipline, and sweat. But little did I know that this journey was also about to open doors to the uncharted territory of the mind.

My path as a junior athlete led me to pursue a degree in Exercise and Sport Science. With my mind full of the science of the body, I began to get curious about the world beyond muscles and bones. That's when I dove into the realm of mindfulness practices, a path that led me to meditation, cold therapy, breathwork, and journaling. It was a journey that led me to a profound realisation—the mind holds the key to every facet of our being.

The mind, as I discovered, is more than just a passenger; it is the captain. The leader. The skipper. The big dog. It orchestrates our experiences, shapes our emotions, and navigates our reactions. Armed with this newfound wisdom, my passion for helping others achieve their best took a new direction—one that merged the worlds of mind and body, forming the bedrock of Benefitlab Health and Wellness.

Picture a retreat where the balance of mindset, mindfulness, and movement is realised—a place where these three pillars stand as the foundation of a life-changing journey. This is the world that I have created through Benefitlab. But it's not just about lofty ideas and "hippie" concepts; it's about addressing real-world challenges faced by today's teens and adolescents.

In an era where societal pressures, academic stress, and social media often blur the path to mental wellness, Benefitlab stands to prove to



individuals you have the ability to achieve success, while still having a laugh. Through Health Performance Coaching and interactive workshops, I educate and empower individuals to perform simple daily practices that act as a protective layer to mental health issues. It's a message that resonates deeply—a message that tells us by challenging our mind and body, we empower ourselves to build stronger connections, improve our confidence, and kick genuine goals.

During our adolescent years, we stand at the pivotal intersection of self-discovery and personal growth. It's a juncture where life's challenges can resemble an uncontrollable vehicle lacking a steering wheel. However, amidst the inherent unpredictability of our world, the combination of a proactive mindset, mindfulness, and purposeful movement can serve as the control we desire, steering us towards a more empowered and fulfilling journey.

A resilient mindset becomes our ally, transforming challenges into stepping stones and embracing failures as milestones on our journey. Mindfulness becomes our anchor, grounding us amidst the digital noise and helping us navigate the turbulence of thoughts and emotions. And movement? Movement becomes our physical expression of strength, releasing tension, boosting mood, and fostering a confident stride.

As I watch the world around me, I'm reminded of how crucial it is to embrace the simplicity of wellness. Beneath the complexities of life, beneath the pressure to succeed, there lies a truth—by understanding our mindset, challenging our bodies, and seeking more mindfulness, we equip ourselves with the tools to not just survive but thrive.

In a world where self-care can often be overshadowed by the pursuit of success, my message, rooted in the essence of Benefitlab Health and Wellness, is this: Embrace a journey that celebrates wellness in its entirety. Let us laugh, let us play, and let us love ourselves as we navigate life's challenges. Together, let's take control of our lives towards a life of resilience, confidence, unwavering strength, laughter, and play.

I'm Ben, the driving force behind Benefitlab Health and Wellness. My passion for empowering young minds led me to create a platform that nurtures holistic wellbeing. If you're ready to embark on a journey towards resilience, confidence, and a life empowered by mindset, mindfulness, and movement, connect with me at [Your Contact Information]. Together, let's shape a future where every step is a step towards a stronger, more confident you.

Benjamin McDonald
Benefitlab Health and Wellness
benefitlabwellness.com.au



All Together Now is an **award-winning charity** dedicated to preventing all forms of racism in Australia. Our mission is to **educate Australians about racism and hate**, and to mobilise systemic change.

We do this by imagining and delivering innovative and evidence-based projects that promote **racial equity**. We are community driven, utilise partnered approaches and all our work is intersectional.



We have several resources and programs available for young people, teachers, frontline workers, parents and caregivers focusing on issues such as racism in schools, divisive misinformation, online hate and extremism.

Hateful Conspiracy Theories & Fake News Workshops

Brand-new evidence-based resources for teachers, educators, parents and frontline workers aimed at building their skills to recognise and respond to people who are engaging with hateful misinformation, fake news and conspiracy theories.

Countering Far-right Extremism Workshops

Young people are routinely targeted online by far-right extremists promoting hate and violence. Our interactive workshops are designed to provide participants with a nuanced understanding of far-right extremism and guidance on how to respond to young people in the early stages of engagement with hateful ideas.

Anti-Racism Training

We are currently developing new training programs aimed at tackling racism in the workplace and in schools. Check out our website for more information and subscribe to our newsletter for updates!

Agent C

A free online program for young people in NSW that enhances their confidence and capacity to unpack and critically engage with hateful conspiracy theories and fake news. Young people, schools and youth services can apply to participate!

Discussing Racism with Children - Free Resource

As a parent or caregiver, it's likely that at some point you'll need to navigate conversations about race and racism with children. To make this easier and more effective, we partnered with the ABC series The School That Tried To End Racism to create a guide for adults to have better conversations with children about racism.

Everyday Racism App

A world-first mobile app designed to challenge your understanding of racism. Designed by All Together Now in partnership with Australian universities, the app has won several international awards, including from the United Nations.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

As an independent not-for-profit organisation, we need your support. Your donation will help us to continue our work to promote racial equity in Australia and instigate long-term, structural change All Together Now is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible. Visit our website to donate now.

Visit alltogethernow.org.au to learn more about our anti-racism programs.

All of our work at All Together Now is imagined, designed and conducted on unceded Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and that Australia was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Embracing Healing and Transformation through Camel Treks:

A Journey to Grounding

In the hustle and bustle of today's digital world, where screens dominate our lives, it's easy to lose touch with the world outside and, in the process, disconnect from our own inner selves.

This profound disconnect manifests in the form of stress, anxiety, and a growing sense of unease among our youth. Yet, there exists a powerful remedy, a timeless practice that has the potential to rekindle the human spirit – grounding. Harnessing the magic of grounding can create life-affirming experiences for youth.

THE ESSENCE OF GROUNDING: A RETURN TO NATURE'S EMBRACE

Grounding, also known as earthing, is a journey that leads us back to the warm embrace of Mother Nature. It's about leaving behind the digital cacophony, disconnecting from the virtual realm, and immersing oneself in the profound simplicity of the great outdoors. This voyage is a return to our roots, a reawakening to the rhythmic heartbeat of the Earth herself.

In our modern world, we've drifted far from these natural rhythms. The constant glow of screens, artificial lights that never dim, and an increasing detachment from the world outside have thrown our internal clocks into chaos. The consequences are tangible – poor sleep quality, heightened stress levels, and a host of health issues. Our youth are particularly vulnerable to these disruptions, and their well-being is at stake.

A GATEWAY TO REDISCOVERY

Nature, without any effort, has the capacity to empower and rejuvenate the spirits of our youth through the practice of grounding. Camel trekking blends nature therapy, the wisdom of animal therapy, and the excitement of immersive outdoor activities to guide young souls back to themselves and the world around them.

THE DIGITAL EXODUS: A REAWAKENING TO THE REAL WORLD

At the heart of such programs lies a profound digital detox. Participants embark on a journey where screens are forgotten, and the virtual world fades into insignificance. This escape from the relentless buzz of notifications and screens allows them to embrace the present moment, to breathe deeply, and to fully engage with the wonders of the world surrounding them.

BATHING IN NATURE'S RADIANCE: THE BEAUTY OF NATURAL LIGHT

The modern world's artificial lighting has distorted our perception of

natural day-night cycles. Our programs immerse participants in the gentle embrace of natural light. They experience the full spectrum of daylight, bask in the soothing darkness of the night, and, in doing so, rekindle their circadian rhythms for a rejuvenating sleep.

RESTING IN THE BOSOM OF THE EARTH: SLEEPING CLOSE TO NATURE

Nestled deep within the wilderness, participants slumber directly upon the Earth's chest. This age-old practice, rooted in grounding philosophy, nurtures a profound connection with the Earth's energy. It's a simple yet potent way to harmonise with the natural world, fostering relaxation and rejuvenation.

SUSTENANCE FOR BODY AND SOUL: CLEAN AIR AND WATER

Clean, untainted air and pristine water sources are the lifeblood of our programs. These elements not only nurture physical well-being but also create a serene environment where mental clarity and emotional healing flourish.

THE ENCHANTING CAMPFIRE: WHERE STORIES AND SOULS COMMUNE

There's something primal and deeply therapeutic about gathering around a campfire. The preservation of this timeless tradition, offering a space for reflection, storytelling, and a sense of belonging can be transformation in and of itself.

UNLOCKING HEARTS: THE HEALING POWER OF ANIMAL THERAPY

Perhaps the most enchanting aspect of the Camel Trekking program is the inclusion of animal therapy, centered around the remarkable camels. Camels possess a unique gift – they can forge connections with humans on an emotional plane. Their gentle, intuitive nature creates a safe haven where participants can unburden their souls, release emotional weight, and bask in the healing power of connection.

A Journey Beyond: Leaving with More Than Memories

An holistic approach to grounding, nature therapy, and animal therapy isn't just a temporary escape from the digital world. It's a profound



journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and empowerment. Participants depart with more than just cherished memories; they carry a renewed sense of self, a deeper love for the natural world, and the inner tools to navigate life's grand challenges.

In a world where disconnection prevails, these grounding opportunities serve as a beacon, bridging the chasm one transformative experience at a time. Outdoor, nature based, animal therapy programs offer youth at risk a path to healing, self-discovery, and a profound reconnection with themselves and the world around them. These voyages remain a timeless pathway to grounding, where the beauty of nature and the wisdom of animals conspire to kindle lasting positive change.

Find Your Ground

We encourage youth and camp coordinators to seek out enchanting journeys of grounding and discover their transformative potential. Whether solo or together, nature and animals can navigate the path to a brighter future.

Karen Ellis
Camel Treks Australia
www.cameltreksaustralia.com.au



Empowering young people to challenge divisive misinformation and online hate

Research shows that young people are increasingly vulnerable to engaging with divisive online misinformation. This includes hateful fake news and conspiracy theories and other deliberately misleading content spread via social media.

In response, All Together Now has developed several programs aimed at empowering young people to critically engage with hateful misinformation, as well as enhancing the skills of teachers, educators, youth workers, parents and caregivers to respond to people who are vulnerable to engaging with online misinformation.

About All Together Now

All Together Now is an award-winning charity dedicated to preventing all forms of racism in Australia. Our mission is to educate Australians about racism and hate. We do this by imagining and delivering innovative and evidence-based projects that promote racial equity.

For many years, we have been active in fostering community resilience to racism, online hate, divisive misinformation and far-right extremism. We've designed a number of government-supported preventive projects aimed at enhancing the skills of young people, frontline workers and parents to respond to this growing challenge.

Why are our programs important?

Research indicates that engagement with online misinformation negatively impacts young people's mental health. This can have serious consequences including disengagement from school or in the classroom, a loss of friends and other social connections, and experiencing/perpetrating bullying.

With the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and its increasingly broad application, including AI-generated deepfake videos that can fuel online misinformation and hate, the challenges for teachers, social workers, parents and caregivers have only increased.

All Together Now's programs are evidence-based, co-designed and have been independently evaluated. Our programs are constantly updated - in cooperation with Australian universities and experts - to reflect the latest trends in this fast-moving space.

Our workshops for young people, teachers, frontline workers and parents

"Agent C" is a free training program for young people that aims to enhance their confidence and capacity to unpack and critically engage with divisive conspiracy theories and fake news, and to have stimulating conversations with their peers encouraging critical thinking. Funded by NSW government through Multicultural NSW, and in partnership with



local Headspace centres, the Agent C program is currently being rolled out across NSW through schools and youth services.

In February 2023, we published the independent evaluation of the first year of our Agent C project. According to Urbis, our independent evaluator, the Agent C pilot was "a highly impactful project" as it had "successfully achieved all four of its intended outcomes, through delivering highly topical and applied content to young people in an engaging way." With the majority of participant survey results consistently in the high 80% to 90% range, we are very confident that the Agent C program is creating real social impact and enhancing community resilience against divisive and hateful misinformation.

Building on our Agent C work, All Together Now has now created brand new resources for teachers, frontline workers and parents aimed at building their skills to recognise and respond to young people who are engaging with problematic misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Our consultation with schools and youth services has taught us that there is a strong need for such resources, as young people are increasingly being confronted with online misleading content, and many teachers and frontline workers may not have the confidence, skills and resources to effectively respond to this growing issue. Our new resources will bridge this gap, preparing them with practical skills and tools.

The new resources consist of facilitated online workshops, as well as take-home materials and toolkits. The packages are based on best practice in terms of instructional design and educational methodologies, and have been created in collaboration with Australian learning design experts, ensuring they align with existing school syllabuses and resources in exploring online safety and media literacy.

For more information about these resources, as well as our other training programs aimed at challenging racism and far-right extremism, please contact us via training@alltogethernow.org.au or check out our website.

Stijn Denayer, CEO
All Together Now
www.alltogethernow.org.au

"The workshop is great. It's allowing people to find the language and tools, to manage difficult conversations. It's giving people the confidence, and permission to share an opinion that is based on evidence, not myths/conspiracies."

Participant from TAFE NSW
Hateful Conspiracy Theories and Fake News workshop
for teachers and frontline workers



MONEY QUEENS:

Financial literacy for teenage girls

WHAT IS MONEY QUEENS?

Money Queens provides school-based financial literacy workshops and presentations to help girls develop financial confidence and provide them with tips and tools to avoid the gaps, traps and mishaps of money management.

Financial literacy is an essential life skill and teenagers need to be explicitly taught how to budget, save and track their spending, what to set up financially when they get their first casual job, what superannuation and tax are, how credit cards and buy now pay later services work, what they need to consider when choosing financial products, the basics of investing and how paying for higher education works.

Based on content from my book, Money Queens: Rule your Money, which draws on my experiences as a mother of two teenage girls and 20-year career as a finance journalist, Money Queens sessions are tailored to the age of the students and requirements of the school.

Financial literacy can change lives and a Money Queens session is the best friend every girl needs as she embarks on her first relationship with money.

WHY GIRLS?

An international survey conducted by the OECD found that the financial literacy of 15-year-olds in Australia fell by 15 points - or the equivalent of 6 months of schooling - between 2012 and 2018.

This is backed up by results from the latest Melbourne Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research HILDA survey, which found that the average 15 to 24-year-old is financially illiterate, and this age group recorded the biggest decline in financial literacy between 2016 and 2020.

The HILDA survey also found that 85% of women under 35 struggle to identify basic financial concepts.

This lack of knowledge is a key factor behind the persistent gender pay gap in Australia – which continues to hover around 13%. In turn, the gender pay gap is a significant contributor to a gender wealth gap that manifests itself most obviously in the gender retirement gap, which sees women retire with 23% less superannuation than men.

Coupled with the fact that women are twice as likely to be the victims of financial abuse, teaching young women about money should be a key priority for all of us.

WHAT A TYPICAL MONEY QUEENS SESSION COVERS

Senior High School presentations, suitable for girls in year 11 and 12, look at what girls need to know about money before they leave school. These sessions cover what influences attitudes to money, the impact of gender on finances, what good money management looks like, credit and debt, and understanding the higher education loans system.



Middle High School presentations, suitable for girls in year 8 and 9, look at what girls need to know about money when they get their first job. These sessions cover what influences attitudes to money, first job money must-dos, what tax and super are and how they work, the impact of gender on finances and what good money management looks like.

Money Queens also run Money Maths workshops for students in year 5 and 6, which teach girls not only how to look after their money, but also why they should care about it. These sessions cover how to set up a simple monthly budget, how to track spending in a money diary, how to group spending to provide insights, how to set up time-based savings goals and how to set up a detailed monthly budget incorporating savings.

Financial literacy learning is most effective when it can be supported at home, however many parents are not confident about their own financial literacy. To help, Money Queens can also run Money Smart parent presentations alongside our in-school presentations.

For more information contact:
Michelle Bowes
Money Queens
www.moneyqueens.com.au
hello@moneyqueens.com.au

THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM

A learning experience that makes a difference

The Big Issue Classroom is a learning experience that provides students with real-life insights into homelessness and disadvantage.

More than 200,000 students across Australia have taken part in workshops since 2009. Led by skilled facilitators, the workshops include a personal account from someone who has experienced marginalisation due to homelessness.

Each workshop booked provides a meaningful employment opportunity for a guest speaker experiencing homelessness, disadvantage or disability.

Our workshops

Workshops are delivered at The Big Issue Classroom spaces in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra and online via an eClassroom.

We offer four one-hour workshops, which have been tailored for different age groups and linked to different areas in the Australian Curriculum:

Josh's Story: The Impact of Choices

> Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. Includes age-appropriate discussion and activity. Josh's story of homelessness is told through words and pictures.

Finding Belonging: Explorations of Homelessness and Disadvantage

> Years 5 and 6. Includes discussion, activity and age appropriate story of homelessness from a guest speaker.

Discussions About Homelessness and Disadvantage

> Suitable for all secondary students.

A Case for Social Enterprise

> Years 10, 11 and 12 students of business and economics.

Optional add-on activity: The Big City Search

> The Big City Search is a self-led activity offered to secondary schools attending face-to-face workshops in Sydney and Melbourne. After a workshop, students are given instructions and clues for a problem-solving challenge which is completed in groups. As they move around the city, they explore issues relating to homelessness such as access to transport, services, healthcare and income. This hands-on experience builds on the content from the workshop by providing an insight into some of the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage.

Why book a workshop?

- Provide students with a greater awareness of homelessness, disability and disadvantage in Australia.
- Challenge students' perceptions and stereotypes of homelessness, disadvantage and disability.
- Increase empathy for people experiencing homelessness by hearing from a guest speaker who shares their lived experience.
- Support The Big Issue Classroom's employment of guest speakers, who have faced barriers to work opportunities.
- Explore curriculum content in new ways and provide a stimulus for learning and community activities.
- Learn about The Big Issue's social enterprises and programs.
- Receive access to student and teacher resources to extend learning beyond the workshop.

About The Big Issue

The Big Issue is one of Australia's most successful social enterprises, best-known for *The Big Issue* magazine. The Big Issue develops sustainable solutions to help people experiencing homelessness and disadvantage positively change their lives.

The Big Issue Classroom employs guest speakers to share their personal stories of disadvantage with workshop participants. More than 8,000 guest speaking opportunities have been created through the initiative.

"The Big Issue Classroom makes students aware of the inequities in the world. After the workshop, they were left speechless. The students gained awareness as to what The Big Issue is and developed a respect for people selling *The Big Issue* magazine. We will return next year!"

— CHRISOULA, TEACHER

"The speakers were really wonderful and it was great to hear firsthand about experiences that disadvantaged and homeless people face, how they overcame them and how The Big Issue had a major impact in their life. Definitely changed my view on homelessness."

— AMY, YEAR 12 STUDENT

Pricing

Visit thebigissue.org.au for pricing information.

Schools receive a discount of 10% when they book three or more workshops.

How to book

Visit the bigissue.org.au/our-programs/education/ to make a booking request. Bookings are subject to availability.

Melbourne and general enquiries

P 03 9663 4533
E classroom@bigissue.org.au

Sydney and eClassroom enquiries

P 02 8332 7200
E nswclassroom@bigissue.org.au

Canberra enquiries

P 02 8332 7200
E actclassroom@bigissue.org.au

Homelessness a Big Issue

How do people become homeless? Why don't they get jobs? Who supports them? How can we help?

These are some of the many questions we explore in The Big Issue Classroom.

WHAT IS THE BIG ISSUE CLASSROOM?

The Big Issue Classroom, created by leading social enterprise The Big Issue, runs interactive workshops for primary, secondary, tertiary and corporate audiences. Led by skilled facilitators, our workshops encourage discussion around homelessness and marginalisation, break down stereotypes and provide real-life insights from a guest speaker who shares their lived experience of homelessness and disadvantage with the class. These workshops are a powerful way to engage with students, create empathy, and provide meaningful work opportunities for speakers who have experienced barriers to employment.

Schools can also participate in The Big City Search, a self-led activity offered to secondary students attending workshops in Sydney and Melbourne. From the perspective of a person experiencing homelessness, students follow instructions and clues to complete a series of challenges around the city. Through this immersive activity, students explore access to transport, services, healthcare and income, and develop empathy for people experiencing homelessness.

HOMELESSNESS CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

“Homeless” means “without a home”... so what's a home? Somewhere stable, safe and secure where you can rest, have privacy and feel comfortable. The latest census data estimates the number of people experiencing homelessness in Australia at more than 122,000. Almost half of this number are women and girls, and almost 40% are under 25. Only 6% are sleeping rough, which means that most are invisible to the public – sleeping on friends' couches, in abandoned buildings, homeless shelters, boarding houses, or in other short-term accommodation. Homelessness is diverse and the causes are varied, often a combination of several factors including domestic and family violence, job loss, housing stress, physical and mental illness, addictions and natural disasters. Whatever the cause, we know that homelessness is not a choice, and can happen to anyone.

The Big Issue Classroom's guest speakers share moving stories about their own experience of homelessness with students, and it never fails to make a real impact. Their stories illustrate the way that circumstances, luck and individual choices can result in homelessness, and demonstrate

how homelessness and disadvantage can create cycles that are difficult to escape. For example, if someone loses their job and is unable to pay rent, they may experience homelessness. Not having a fixed address will make it more difficult for that person to get a new job, which may lead to low self-esteem or withdrawal from their networks, which in turn will make it increasingly difficult for them to access support and earn an income. The longer homelessness persists, the more difficult it becomes to escape it. Each story is unique, but many describe similar cycles that are difficult to break without support.

Importantly, our guest speakers also talk about the ways they have made positive changes in their lives, and emphasise the importance of seeking support when needed. As well as leaving a lasting impression on students, guest speakers benefit in many ways from being employed in this enterprise.

“I enjoy this more than any other job I've had. The interaction with students is amazing. I love to see their reactions when they learn about homelessness. Kids come up to me weeks or months later and ask how I'm going – I can see the message is getting through. When I first started I was really shy and found it really difficult to talk to big groups. Talking to students has brought me out of my shell. I've now got a lot more confidence. I'm not as isolated anymore. I can now talk to people more easily, and know more people in the community.”

- Shane, The Big Issue Classroom guest speaker

SEEKING SUPPORT

We speak to about 20,000 students annually in The Big Issue Classroom, and statistically speaking we expect that about 100 of these students will currently be experiencing homelessness. Significantly more will be experiencing factors that put them at risk of homelessness in the future. An important message in our workshops is that anyone can experience difficulties in life, and that there is support available. We encourage students to be aware of and use the support services available to them, knowing that this discussion may prompt students at risk of homelessness to reach out for help or support their friends or family to do so. In this way, we hope young people experiencing hard times will be more likely to access support before falling into a cycle of disadvantage and homelessness.

For more information on The Big Issue Classroom, or to make a booking request, visit the bigissue.org.au/our-programs/education/

Julianne Gardiner
Manager – Education Enterprises | The Big Issue

Unlocking potential: Fostering Belonging

In a world that's increasingly digitally connected yet emotionally distant, the importance of authentic belonging resonates deeply, especially among Australia's youth. In a world that seems increasingly interconnected through screens and social networks, the significance of genuine belonging cannot be overstated, especially for the youth.

Recent statistics paint a concerning picture – a substantial portion of young people are grappling with feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging. This issue is more than just a passing concern; it's a call to action for society to recognise the profound impact of belonging on the wellbeing of our youth.

THE STATS TELL THE STORY!

Statistics reveal a troubling reality regarding the well-being of students across Australia. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) reports that around one in four students experience high levels of loneliness and isolation. The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework indicates that approximately 40% of students struggle with a sense of disconnection and lack of belonging within their school community- a figure that peaks at year 9. Results from PISA testing shows the sense of belonging for Australian students is below the OECD average and is declining over the past twelve years of measurement.

These figures starkly depict the challenges that students face in developing a genuine sense of belonging in their educational environments.

This is mirrored in the wider community where leading mental health organisations recognise up to 60% of young adults admit to feeling lonely on a regular basis. This sense of not belonging can lead to a myriad of negative outcomes, including increased stress levels, decreased self-esteem, poor academic outcomes, inability to reach full potential.

FROM ISOLATION TO INCLUSION

True acceptance and belonging hold transformative power. When young individuals are embraced for their unique identities, they are more likely to develop strong self-esteem and resilience. The benefits ripple across various aspects of life. According to headspace, a leading youth mental health organization in Australia, young people who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to engage positively in school, exhibit better mental health outcomes, and develop healthier relationships with peers and adults.

The benefits of true acceptance and belonging are immeasurable. When young individuals find themselves in environments where they are accepted for who they truly are, their self-confidence blossoms. They feel valued and understood, allowing them to pursue their passions without fear of judgment. Genuine belonging fosters a sense of security and support, which in turn leads to improved wellbeing.

Schools play a pivotal role in fostering belonging through initiatives such as encouraging open

dialogue about belonging, helping young people to understand the impact of being from a marginalised group, even when the impact is not intended. By emphasising the value of diversity, and equipping students to be express themselves without judgement.

Creating an inclusive culture requires a collective effort. Empowering the school community to identify barriers to belonging, and to generate solutions to make their environment genuinely inclusive is a great way to start. Include voices from across the community, students, teachers, school leaders, administrators, others in the broader community to explore options for improvement. Consider using design thinking practices to increase the intentionality of the process, and the likelihood of transformative outcomes.

Join us at Value Learning in shaping an educational landscape where every student experiences a deep sense of belonging, enabling their growth and well-being. Check out Value Learning and let's all work toward ensuring that every student feels like they truly belong and watch them thrive.

Fran Baxter
Value Learning Intercultural Specialists
www.valuelearning.com.au



Free Mind Skate School

Resilience through failure,
Confidence through achievement.



Free Mind Skate School was founded by Josh Smith, a local skateboarder who has been skating in Adelaide for 20+yrs. Josh has become well known in the skate community and to local councils over the years due to his constant involvement in the facilitation of skate related events and competitions, as well as being a competition judge with the Australian Skateboard Federation. On top of that, for nearly half a decade Josh has been seen at skateparks across Adelaide coaching beginners to help boost the next generation of Adelaide skaters. What started as a part-time job while studying full-time all those years ago, has turned into a way of life.

Free Mind Skate School is an all-inclusive skateboarding hub based on the South Coast of Adelaide that can tailor coaching solutions to all ages, genders, and skill levels. We focus on building a strong sense of community, while promoting safe and consistent progression on a skateboard, offering private skate coaching for large groups, small groups, and 1-on-1 sessions. We also run home-school sessions which are a great physical outlet, as well as a way to increase confidence and social skills.

Here at Free Mind, we are also proud to offer a unique mentoring service aimed specifically at increasing resilience and confidence through our Stigma Stall Program. We strongly believe that every young person deserves the same respect and fair equality of opportunity in this life, regardless of their background.

Private Coaching [1-on-1 & Groups]

Whatever your ability right now, we can help take your skateboarding to the next level!

The skills component focusses on fundamental

movements and positioning of the body required to learn how to skateboard, learn new tricks, and naturally advance to a higher skill level. The confidence component focusses on participants learning how to 'read' the skatepark, know their own ability, and become creative with what they can already do which will help promote further progress beyond the coaching session.

Stigma Stall Program

Free Mind Skate School is proud to offer a tailored mentoring service aimed at developing better everyday living-skills and increased social- interaction. The 'Stigma Stall Program' utilizes a unique blend of social-psychological principles and concepts from the philosophy-of-mind to help clients identify areas of concern regarding behaviours and attitudes towards the world in which they exist.

As well as being an avid skater, Stigma Stall mentor Josh also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Behavioural Science and has vast experience in youth mentoring/engagement. Using positive mentorship through skateboarding to build a trusting and informal relationship, this serves as the foundation that positive change can be built upon.

Skateboarders are incredibly resilient, which comes from years of mastering their craft. In life we must get back up when we fall, and although falling is inevitable at times, this does not have to mean failure. Through progression in their skating, clients see within themselves that positive change is possible in their life. This inherently promotes clients to willingly take responsibility for their own future, whilst continually building confidence and developing resilience. This cutting edge program purposefully seeks to reduce the harmful effects of stigmatization, with the aim of promoting an

overall higher quality of life and improved sense of wellbeing.

The 'Stigma Stall Program' aims to make participants comfortable with who they are, despite their setbacks, and is much less concerned with creating elite skaters

Home School Program

Our specialist home-school classes come in two forms!).

This is very much like the public clinics we run after school, but during the day so that our home-school families can enjoy the space without all of the craziness that comes with the after-school hours rush! Boards and helmets can be provided for those who do not have their own, and our professional coaches will be there to help participants navigate the skatepark. Essentially, this group clinic is the coolest P.E. lesson we could have ever dreamed of as kids!

Free Mind Skate School
Josh Smith
www.freemindskateschool.com.au





PICKLEBALL FOR SCHOOLS: THE WORLD'S MOST INCLUSIVE AND FASTEST GROWING SPORT.



In recent years, schools around the world have been seeking innovative ways to engage students in physical activities that not only promote fitness but also foster teamwork and enjoyment.

Enter Pickleball – The fastest growing sport in Australia and the ideal sport for kids of all ages and abilities.

What is Pickleball?

Pickleball is a paddle sport played on a court with the dimensions of a badminton court and a net similar to a tennis net, but at a lower height. It uses a perforated plastic ball and solid paddles, making it suitable for players of all ages and skill levels. The game blends the strategic elements of other racquet sports with a uniquely fun and social atmosphere, making it an ideal addition to any school's sports curriculum.

The Pickleball for Schools Program is fantastic initiative that brings the excitement of pickleball to educational institutions, promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among students. The infrastructure and affordability of equipment to start playing pickleball provides a low barrier for schools to introduce the sport.

Why Should Schools Embrace Pickleball?

Inclusivity: Pickleball is designed to be inclusive, making it accessible for students of varying abilities and fitness levels to participate and enjoy.

Physical Fitness: Engaging in pickleball helps students stay active and improve their cardiovascular health, endurance, and agility.

Teamwork and Sportsmanship: Playing pickleball encourages teamwork, communication, and good sportsmanship among students, fostering positive social interactions.

Hand-Eye Coordination: The sport sharpens hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, which are essential for various academic and real-world activities.

Minimal Equipment and Space: Schools can utilise existing badminton lines or multi-use sports courts, making pickleball a cost-effective addition to physical education programs.

For schools and clubs in Australia, Pickleball HQ is the leading supplier of quality pickleball equipment including paddles, nets and balls.

Get in the Game!

Incorporating pickleball into your school's physical education curriculum can be a game-changer. By combining fitness, camaraderie, and fun, the Pickleball for Schools Program offers a golden opportunity for schools to enrich their students' lives through sport.

If you are interested in exploring the introduction of pickleball at your school or want to purchase pickleball equipment for your school speak with David Lurie CEO of Pickleball HQ and founder of Pickleball for Schools on 0416 098 771 or visit www.pickleballhq.com.au



‘Getting Bigger Than What Is Bothering You’

Would you like your students to know how to soothe themselves when their life gets bumpy? (You might find this process helpful for you too, like I do.)

Have you ever noticed a student that seems to be stuck in an ANGRY part of them?

Or an ANXIOUS, DEPRESSED, DISAPPOINTED or OVER-CRITICAL part of them?

Or perhaps they seem NUMB or ZONED OUT or like they are not feeling anything at all.

(Maybe you are reading this, and you are that Student that feels some of the things above.)

And this means they can't learn, and you can't teach effectively. That must be frustrating.

Typically, all of us, do one of two things when we are bothered:

1. We become overwhelmed with emotion – like that is all we are – (under- regulated) or
2. We turn away from our emotion, shove them down, pretend nothing is going on (over-regulated).

We often learn how to do these things via the modelling of others, or we do the opposite of what we observe.

I have a process I can show you whether you are a teacher (or a student). And the good news! Anyone can do it. This process will enable you to help your students purposefully step into their Big Wise SELF (and everyone has one no matter what age). Once you are in that all-encompassing Big SELF you can be beside any other part that is present, with compassion and curiosity.

And when you do that, it is like MAGIC happens.

This comes from Parts theory, which is non-pathologising. It also utilises neuroscience and incorporates a lovely practice called Focusing or Felt sensing (which is a MORE than MINDFULNESS way of being). It is like an adult being compassionate with a young child who is hurting (physically or emotionally). Except in this case, it is the person's Big SELF being with for example, their angry or anxious part.

And the brain science...

When you send compassion to a hurting part of you, what your brain does is send GABA (an inhibitory neuro-transmitter) from your medial pre-



frontal cortex (the part in your brain just between your eyebrows) to the activated neural network that is open in your sub-cortical (in the middle of your brain). The GABA basically says: SSSHHH!

And just like that you feel a bit more settled. Of course, the thing that is bothering you may not be fixed. However, the part of you that is activated – for example, the angry, critical, sad, anxious part will settle. This means you will not feel so overwhelmed. And that means the student can learn and you can teach.

Let me tell you a story....

I was counselling a 14-year-old girl. Let's call her Sally. She came to me because she had a part of her that was getting anxious, and it was affecting her life. Underneath the anxiety was a part of her said things like: 'I am not good at this.' "I will get this wrong." "I am hopeless." This is called an inner critic. Not very kind, is it?

Sally just like you and me was born with inherent worth. Her inherent worth is her birthright. No-one gave that to her. Sally didn't have to earn it, and no-one can take that away from her. Sally needed to get in touch with her Big SELF that intrinsically knows she is worthy and loveable and enough. And once she could do that, she could be beside the critical part that was giving her a hard time. So, all I did was to show her what her inner Big SELF already knew.

I am sure you have a toolbox of ways to help students settle. What if you had a couple more tools? Or what if you Students were shown these "Life skills?" And what if those tools were simple and effective?

I was inspired to come up with these practices because one of my mentors Eugene Gendlin www.focusing.org wrote a paper called "Giving Therapy Away." And ever since I read that paper, I thought that is what I want to do. I want to help those who come into my orbit to know these 'life skills.' If I can show you and you can show your students or if I can show your students and you can learn too, our impact will be greater and that has got to be a good thing, don't you think?

If you are interested in finding out more about my MORE than MINDFULNESS Course, go to <https://hopeandpossibility.com.au/more-than-mindfulness-schools-program/>

leonie@morethemindfulness.com.au
0438 412 667



Music for Better Mental Health

“Where words fail, music speaks,” said the world-renowned Danish author, Hans Christian Anderson. This is especially true when exploring the intersection between music as a form of therapy and mental health.

According to the Australian Music Therapy Association, music therapy is a research-based allied health profession that can support people of any age who might be experiencing mental, intellectual, physical, emotional, or social challenges, and/or are wishing to improve their wellbeing.

Sierra Verity-Beasley of Resound Music Therapy is a registered music therapist who has an interest in mental health and music to support people to feel better, share, connect and creatively express their authentic selves.

“The great thing about using music as a tool is that it is just so diverse and so applicable to so many different problems, challenges, people, and situations that you might encounter,” explains Sierra. “In that way, it also bridges social or emotional or physical challenges that people are having, that other therapies might not”, she added.

“Everyone seems to understand that music helps them feel better. And they generally get a sense that they want music in their lives. But they might not necessarily know exactly how, or why, or how to do that more intentionally for themselves.”

Sierra Verity-Beasley, Music Therapist

At Satellite Foundation, music is used as a medium to empower young people to feel better, make friendships, and express their unique creativity. In fact, Satellite celebrates all forms of creativity and has the strong belief that being ‘creative’ is simply being given permission to see, feel, share and communicate our experiences in this world in lots of different ways. When we are being ‘creative’, our brains release dopamine, which is a natural anti-depressant. Dopamine plays a role in how we feel pleasure. It’s a big part of our unique human ability to think and plan. It helps us strive, focus, and find things interesting. Being creative can also help to process trauma.

Satellite Foundation offers a range of programs, workshops and overnight camps for children and young people aged 8 – 25 who have a family

member with mental health challenges. Satellite puts children and young people at the heart of everything we do. Our programs support the ongoing growth and transformation of young people so they can realise their full potential. And we’re here for the long-term, supporting young people into early adulthood and beyond.

All Satellite programs and workshops are FREE for eligible families. Workshops centre on creativity and connecting with new friends. Programs are offered both in-person and online.

5 MUSICAL SELF-CARE TIPS FROM SATELLITE

- Sing out loud
- Play an instrument
- Wake up to your favourite song
- Mindful listening
- Make a playlist

Visit www.satellitefoundation.org.au for more information and to sign up.

The good human factory

Revolutionising Mental Health Awareness and Well-being



REVOLUTIONISING MENTAL HEALTH



In 2019, a somber reality hit home for Cooper Chapman, pro surfer and adventurer, when his youngest sister faced the heart-wrenching loss of two school friends to suicide during their final year of school.

This heartache propelled Chapman into a mission that transcended his own successes and adventures. It sparked the inception of something transformative - 'The Good Human Factory,' a mental health organisation that is reshaping perceptions and conversations around mental well-being.

Chapman, known for his accomplishments in riding the waves and gracing the World Surf League qualifying tour, channeled his energy into a different kind of wave - one of change and awareness. He was galvanised by the question of how young lives within his community could be so burdened by despair. This propelled him to initiate a seismic shift in how society perceives and handles mental health.

The year 2020 marked the turning point when 'The Good Human Factory' emerged from Chapman's dedication. This organisation, with its multifaceted approach, strives to normalize conversations about mental health and foster a global shift in mindset. Rooted in empowerment and understanding, it seeks to provide tools and perspectives that help individuals navigate the complex terrain of mental well-being.

WORKSHOPS THAT IGNITE CHANGE

At the heart of 'The Good Human Factory' are workshops that go beyond the ordinary. These workshops, delivered both within schools and corporate settings, serve as catalysts for transformation. They open with Chapman's

personal journey, weaving his experiences as a professional surfer with his own struggles in mental health. By sharing his vulnerabilities and triumphs, Chapman creates an environment where participants feel seen, heard, and empowered.

The workshops pivot around a profound concept - the cultivation of personal values over external validation. Chapman's own transition from measuring self-worth through career milestones to anchoring it in values like responsibility, gratitude, empathy, mindfulness, and kindness, serves as an inspiration. These values become guiding lights, helping individuals steer through life's challenges with a resilient and compassionate approach.

The impact of these workshops is nothing short of remarkable. With over 35,000 high school students from different Australian states and numerous corporate participants benefiting from them, 'The Good Human Factory' is sowing the seeds of change. Feedback from these workshops paints a vivid picture: 98% leave feeling uplifted, 95% acquire fresh insights into mental health, and 85% commit to integrating the workshop's teachings into their lives.

A PODCAST THAT AMPLIFIES VOICES

Chapman's brainchild also includes a podcast, 'Good Human with Cooper Chapman.' This platform, far from superficial interviews, delves into meaningful conversations with over 100 high-profile guests. The podcast not only creates awareness but also underscores the power of dialogue in normalizing discussions around mental health. It has amassed more than 500,000 downloads, resonating with individuals seeking genuine narratives and valuable insights.

A COMMUNITY THAT FOSTERS GRATITUDE AND GROWTH

One of the most compelling aspects of 'The Good Human Factory' is the '1% Good Club,' a free Instagram-based accountability community. This community embodies the spirit of gratitude and introspection, with daily guided meditations and nightly reflections on the positives of the day. Over 400,000 expressions of gratitude have flowed into this space from more than 1200 members across the world, forging connections and fostering resilience. DM @thegoodhumanfactory “I wanna join the club” to be added in.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Good Human Factory's ethos reverberates beyond Chapman himself. Collaborating with a group of young, dynamic athletes, including names like Ryan Williams and Alex Hayes, the organization's mission has evolved. This year, the focus is to extend its reach and touch even more lives. Chapman's words encapsulate this ambition: "We want to help as many people start their mental health journey as we can in 2023 - it's that simple, that's the goal."

In a world awakening to the paramount importance of mental health, 'The Good Human Factory' stands as a beacon of hope and transformation. With its holistic approach - from workshops that stir change to a podcast that amplifies voices and a community that nurtures gratitude - it has become a driving force that is reshaping attitudes towards mental well-being. Cooper Chapman's journey from surfer to mental health advocate is indeed inspiring, but it's the collective endeavor of 'The Good Human Factory' that truly shines as a guiding light toward a more empathetic and resilient society.

Cooper Chapman
The Good Human Factory
www.thegoodhumanfactory.com

Moving Through Your Emotions

You are standing at the front of the class with 28 students at their desks, and this is what you see: blank stares, chattering amongst a small group in the back corner, some students on their phones, and other students simply rocking back on their chairs looking up at the ceiling.

You notice a few other students keeping to themselves, and staying isolated, others are dealing with depression, eating disorders, or anxiety disorders.

For the students that have shown up to class – because you know there are a few that haven’t attended in a while – you can see they aren’t present with you.

Based on the teachers I know, the thoughts running through your head may be:

- “I’m so over this,”
- “The lockdowns really messed with these kids,”
- “I’m so tired. Just so, so tired,”

You go to the staffroom at recess and lunch and see the same worn-out, depleted, and somewhat hopeless looks on the faces of your colleagues.

You are not alone in feeling this way. Your school is not alone in experiencing this.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel, there is a way to change this, you don’t have to “just deal with it.”

But how? I hear you ask because you simply do not have the time or energy to give your students, let alone yourself, what they need.

This is where I step in. As a practicing psychotherapist and group fitness instructor, I combine the benefits of physical movement

with the knowledge of emotional and mental health strategies to re-engage your students.

Your students can feel better about themselves, pay more attention in class, have more confidence, be more open to learning, and have their mood improved.

FACTS & EXPERIENCES

Since the pandemic and lockdowns, we have seen an exponential rise in the mental and emotional health issues suffered by our teenagers. The 2022 Mission Australia’s Youth Survey found that more than half the youth needed mental health support during their life. Moreover, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare stated that suicide is the leading cause of death in Australians aged 15 – 24. These startling statistics indicate that our youth need more mental and emotional support now more than ever.

Through my work with teenage students in my own practice, I have witnessed first-hand the crippling anxiety, fear, depression, and stress they struggle with daily. Our teens today have all the same feelings and changes to contend with that we did back in the day, but they have it on the backend of a global pandemic and numerous lockdowns. The pandemic raised multiple existential issues such as, “What’s the point of life? Why am I even here? What really matters? And so forth for us as adults, let alone our children. Can you imagine the turmoil it plunged our teens into when they were already going through such a hard life stage?

As a result, teachers I have spoken with over the course of the past two years have noted the following in their students: less resilience, more anxiety, less respect, and more social challenges. Whilst most schools have wonderfully supportive wellbeing teams, they are inundated with referrals and the complex needs of the students. The staff are tired, burnt

out, and simply do not have the time to provide the extra support that their colleagues and students need.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT YOU?

My background in teaching group fitness and dance programs has taught me much about the benefit of movement not just for our mental health, but our emotional health, too.

When we move, we feel better. Physiologically, our brain chemistry changes. Emotionally, our feelings shift. Mentally, we become clearer. Spiritually, our hearts and souls become open to receiving grace.

Therefore, I have created wellbeing workshops that incorporate the physical movement element alongside providing mental and emotional health strategies. These workshops can be tailored for students or staff. They are engaging, interactive, and time-efficient.

THE BENEFITS

Through engagement in these workshops, participants are likely to be more attentive in class, more resilient to challenges, and less anxious in life. Participants will also learn a variety of strategies, incorporating body, mind, and spirit, to help them cope with mental and emotional stressors. This will ideally alleviate some of the burden that our school wellbeing teams are under, as well as the stress that our teachers face with disengaged students.

NEXT STEPS

To explore what workshops would best assist your students and staff, contact Steph via the website below.

Stephanie de Niese
Movement with Steph
www.movementwithsteph.com.au



Empowering Youth Through Creative Expression:

Making a safe space where young Australians can heal, learn, and grow.

In a world where the voices of young people often go unnoticed, Heaps Decent is shining a spotlight on their creativity, experiences, and perspectives. Through its innovative workshop program, this leading arts organisation fosters creative skills and nurtures the wellbeing of young Australians across NSW. With a focus on digital music production and multimedia exploration, Heaps Decent provides a transformative platform that empowers youth and encourages self-expression.

Their approach is built upon strong foundations—long-term partnerships in metropolitan, regional, and remote areas—that allow them to reach young individuals from all walks of life. By engaging in hands-on music production and visual media activities, participants delve into a world of creative possibilities. Led by professional artists, workshops offer a unique blend of technical guidance and artistic mentorship.

In highly accessible workshops young people explore the following areas:

- Storytelling through song writing. Young people delve into themes that resonate with their lives, building skills in composition and self-expression. Whether rapping or singing, this musical avenue serves as a powerful channel for their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to find their voice.
- Contemporary music production. Utilising cutting-edge digital audio workstations and software tools, exploration of these technologies empowers youth to engage in conceptual and practical music making processes. Productive sessions introduce an understanding of track composition and structure, and as they always result in a song, lead to a great sense of accomplishment.

- Visual exploration. Young people can experiment with an array of traditional and new

media techniques to express themselves, including video, photography, digital illustration and design, animation, virtual and augmented reality.

Beyond creative skills development, Heaps Decent's program supports overall wellbeing. Through creative engagement participants are empowered to explore their thoughts, feelings, and identities. This fosters self-confidence and personal agency. The joy of creation and the connections formed with fellow participants and mentors become building blocks of positive mental and emotional states.

Heaps Decent's customised programs cater to young people who are experiencing many challenges and are often disengaged from education. The organisation has experience in schools across NSW, including specialised education settings for young people with challenging behaviours and complex mental health conditions, and further environments such as Youth Justice Centres, refugees and residential care programs.

For more program information visit www.heapsdecent.com or find us on social media

[@heapsdecent](https://www.instagram.com/heapsdecent)

For workshop enquiries contact hey@heapsdecent.com
Nerida Woods



Personalities in the Classroom of Life

Many adults find teenagers complicated creatures – moody, disrespectful, complacent, defiant – am I making you twitch yet?

What if I told you there is an easy to use (with or without their knowledge) profiling tool that will 100% help you GET THEM.

Yep, I use it all the time with teenagers, and it works.

This tool aligns your teenager with a personality ‘style’, identifying common traits that can lead to better communication, more respect between family members, and a clear career path!

Let me give you some examples.

A few years ago I was working with one of the local Shires, running Friday evening youth leadership programs. This particular Shire had a number of disengaged youths who were running amuck, breaking and entering, causing a real ruckus. The Shire got me in to run a series of engaging and highly interactive workshops to try and entice them off the streets and into a more rewarding alternative. One 14 year old girl (let’s call her ‘Miss 14’) was especially difficult. Youth Workers really struggled with her and she was put in the ‘too hard’ basket and dismissed...a lot. Her Mum had even started to come along to the sessions to ‘try’ to control her. She constantly interrupted, demanded attention, bullied the other kids, and was very vocal with pretty bad language.

My first encounter with her was less than a positive experience, I must admit she put me through my paces, trying to rev me up, but I persevered. I realised, within the first hour, that, although there was definite signs of trauma, she was also a Resourceful Orange (one of the profiling ‘styles’). So, I set about casting an award-winning plan.

I set her to work! That’s it!

That’s all I did!

Every time she started to disengage and annoy the other kids, I would get her to do a chore. Of course, I disguised the chore as a fun competition. And it didn’t take long to hook her in and keep her on track. In fact, I couldn’t get rid of her once I engaged her personality type and acknowledged her strengths, joys, interests, and abilities.

Another example. A school in the south west of Western Australia was having issues with a group of Year 9 boys bullying another group of Year 9 boys. They asked me to wave my magic wand in a 45-minute time slot. Always up for the challenge, I asked the students in the class (all students, I didn’t target anyone) to divide themselves into four equal groups. They were to go to separate groups from their friends (with little rewards helping the situation along). I gave each group a poster with a set of images showing people doing things they love.



The groups were to discuss what was happening in the poster and either write down words to describe the activities or draw or simply chat about it. Each group rotated around the sets of posters until they saw each poster.

At the end of the activity, they were to go to the poster they liked the most – the one they could see themselves in. To the Teacher’s surprise, the ‘bullies’ went to the Resourceful Orange poster, and the ‘bullied’ went to the Organised Gold poster (FYI: they are opposite personality types). Resourceful Oranges display risk taking behaviours, get bored easily, muck around a lot, and sometimes don’t realise how their sense of humour can offend others. Organised Golds hate rulebreakers and can’t help themselves but do them in.

I had all four personality types do a small presentation to the rest of the class about what brings them joy, likes and dislikes, and how to get the best out of them. Once the ‘bullies’ and the ‘bullied’ could understand and appreciate the value of each colour type, they started getting along. The Resourceful Oranges could appreciate the positive attributes that the Organised Gold could bring (keep them on track, tell them when things were due, always dependable) whilst the Organised Gold could see that the Resourceful Oranges just want to have fun and to not take it so personally. I received a phone call from the Teacher a fortnight later – no more issues – seriously!

I am talking about Personality Dimensions. A Canadian based profiling tool that runs rings around all the other ones I am certified to deliver. It is highly flexible, fun, easy to understand, and can be used with adults too.



One last example. I was working with another Consultant who works specifically with youth who have high levels of anxiety – she teaches them mindfulness. I took her through the Personality Dimensions Facilitator training. She has two daughters,

Lilly*, who is a Resourceful Orange, and Charlotte*, who is an Authentic Blue. She also has a son, Ben*, who is an Enquiring Green. The Consultant is an Organised Gold - a household of very different personality types!

Lilly answers the front door doing a summersault, offering various dance routines as a welcome, whilst Charlotte can be found in the lounge room entertaining her girlfriends, nail polish and cups of herbal tea in abundance. Ben sits in his room, away all the commotion, doing chemistry equations, while the Consultant pulls her hair out worrying that Lilly is going to break her neck turning upside-down on the lampshade, Charlotte’s sensitivity may be set off by a girlfriend not showing up, and Ben becoming a hermit.

Until she learnt about Personality Dimensions and how to play to each of the colours’ strengths.

Now she relaxes in the knowledge that Lilly is not going to change, and she simply needs to accept that Lilly is, and always will be, a daredevil. Charlotte will always be sensitive and will learn ways to manage her sensitivities (and the Consultant can help now too), and that Ben will find other ‘equation loving’ hermits. She learnt this all in a brief period.

If you are keen to find out how to understand your teenager, students, or even your adult staff members, send me an email. I would love to show you just how easy it really is!

Jenny Gleeson
www.jennygleeson.com.au

Jenny Gleeson is a multi-award winning coach and consultant with a strong focus on

Aboriginal communities, not-for-profit organisations, youth services, and charities.

Writing and self-publishing a resource guide called “Personalities in the Classroom”, she sold out her first print run within 6-months and is now negotiating a second edition with

Personality Dimensions®.



SHIBORI Japanese ARTISTRY

Breathing new life into this ancient art, Shibori have revitalised the traditional Japanese method of hand dyeing fabrics, and are taking it to new dimensions.

“It’s sugar for the soul delivered through the textile of fabric” said Shibori owners and creators, Karen Davis and Pepa Martin. Every piece is unique and all it takes is a bit of technique and some enthusiasm. From their shop and studio in Stanmore, in Sydney’s Inner West, this dye-namic duo are sculpting new dimensions into this artistic antiquity and give others the opportunity to do the same.

The process binding fabric is thousands of years old, but the design school dyad have a shared rebellion of traditional textile methods, bringing a new element to the otherwise conventional process Heat-treating silk offers form and dimension that could otherwise not be found in traditional Shibori.

“It’s sculptural fabric,” and has made its way into their collection in a big way with its decadence and depth.

While both Karen and Pepa insist they are not “artists”, the evidence of their artistry oozes from every piece, spanning from cushion covers to surf boards. Working with textiles such as silk, linen and leather, their love of colour bleeds from each creation and now their workshops give others the chance to inspire their own creative confidence. “Sometimes people are too afraid to ruin something. They have an idea, they bring pictures they want to create but sometimes you have to let that go and just try. You really have to surrender to the process.”

Their workshops run every 2 weeks and aim to unlock people’s innate

creativity. “Often people come with the belief they are not creative, and leave with a bag of wonderful pieces and a new outlook. While we teach traditional Shibori techniques we try and inspire people to think outside of the box, and with their hands”.

Karen Davis, Pepa Martin
www.shibori.com.au



Nurturing Connections: The Power of Social Communication and the PEERS Program



SOCIAL DOMAIN

Are you or someone you know struggling to build and maintain meaningful friendships and relationships? In a world where kids, adolescents and adults face countless obstacles, the importance of strong social communication skills and genuine friendships often get overlooked.

Social communication skills are the foundation of our interactions with others. However, many individuals face problems in this area. This affects various aspects of their lives such as school, work and personal relationships.

At The Social Domain, we understand the deep impact these skills have on our well-being and success. We provide individuals with the tools they need to thrive socially, overcome difficulties and lead more meaningful and fulfilling lives.

Facing Problems and Stress: In recent years there has been an increase in a range of learning, behavioural, and communication difficulties among youth and adolescents. These problems can make it hard to make friends, interact socially, mix with same-aged peers, and function in everyday activities. Unfortunately, the long-term result of social isolation can be significant. It can increase the risk of depression, lower self-esteem, decrease participation, disengagement, and a higher risk of suicide or self-harm.

Introducing The PEERS Program: At The Social Domain, we are passionate about supporting children, adolescents and adults who wish to develop their social skills. We offer evidence-based programs such as the PEERS program for ages 12 years -adult and the Social Thinking Program for ages 6-11 years.

The PEERS program, created by Dr. Elizabeth Laugeson at UCLA, is a world-renowned social skills intervention program. It is specifically designed for adolescents and young adults with social problems. It includes those with autism, ADHD, anxiety, depression, and other social difficulties. The program consists of 16 weekly sessions that focus on explicit teaching of specific skills through concrete instructions and role-play exercises.

Our PEERS program helps people develop the following skills:

- Making and keeping friends
- Finding a source of friends
- Conversational skills
- Starting and entering conversations
- Exiting conversations
- Electronic communication
- Appropriate use of humour
- Having get togethers with friends
- Making and keeping romantic relationships
- Handling arguments and disagreements
- Handling teasing
- Handling physical bullying

- Handling cyber bullying
- Decreasing rumours and gossip

Benefits of the PEERS Program: Participating in the PEERS program has been proven to have many benefits for people with neurodiversity and other social problems. The program focuses on supporting social behaviour, including assertiveness and impulse control, while helping social acceptance. It improves social awareness through the development of receptive and expressive social communication skills. Moreover, it builds perspective-taking and empathy, leading to improved social awareness. As a result, participants enjoy increased socialising and building of friendships.

The Role of the Social Coach: An important element of the PEERS program is the role of the "Social Coach." The social coach can be a parent, caregiver, adult sibling, or another supportive person. They attend every week to learn how to help the teen or young adult apply the skills in the program. This collaborative approach gives regular support and guidance for the participants.

Program Details and Inclusions: The 16-week PEERS program is conducted in groups, with each session lasting 90 minutes. In addition, we provide concurrently a 90-minute training session for the allocated social coach. This ensures their active involvement in the participant's growth. At the end of each session, we provide resources to support both the participant and the social coach. We also provide weekly homework tasks to reinforce and develop skills between sessions.

Affordability and Funding Options: The cost of our 16-week PEERS program is \$90 per hour, per group. Please note that there is a separate social coaching/caregivers group run concurrently with the participant group, handled by another clinician. We strive to make the program accessible to all. Participants can use NDIS funding to cover the cost or private health insurance.

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Space: The Social Domain, provides a safe, supportive, and inclusive space. This allows individuals to apply their strengths and individuality while building the social skills that empower them to engage more positively with others. Our experienced clinicians and facilitators are dedicated to fostering a nurturing environment where everyone can thrive.

Take the First Step: Don't hesitate to reach today if you or anyone you know is facing difficulties in building social connections. We are here to help children, adolescents and young adults develop the necessary skills that can improve their life and create lasting friendships. Together, we can nurture meaningful relationships and unlock the power of social communication for all.

Atara Lebransky
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1300 950 992
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Taking the mystery out of puberty

It was grade eight and desperate to cling to childhood as long as possible, I vowed to my mum that I would never wear a bra, never wear a skirt, and never get married. My knees were still covered in dirt most days from playing soccer with the boys.

My body had other ideas.

I’ll never forget the pain of being hit in my budding breasts by the soccer ball one school lunchtime. After the initial shock and pain wore off, came the terrifying thought that maybe there was something wrong with me. Surely having sore, hard lumps behind my nipples couldn’t possibly be normal or healthy. I didn’t know of anyone else having this same experience. Maybe I was sick... maybe even dying. My life flashed before my eyes. I decided then and there that I would happily take a penalty for a handball to protect my new (sore) breasts at all costs.

“Am I normal?”
“Is there something wrong with me?”
“Am I the only one this is happening to?”
“Is my body okay? Is my body good?”
“What if I don’t grow/get a moustache/get my period?”

Now, many years later, as a speaker who has the privilege of working with hundreds of puberteers (children starting the journey of

puberty) on the regular, I know these questions are at the forefront of all their minds. Mix these queries in with a flurry of social media and a smidge of increased societal pressures and we’ve got ourselves a recipe for some very anxious and insecure tweens and teens. But what if I told you, we could significantly reduce the stress and worry in a young person’s life by taking the mystery out of puberty?

As parents, carers and educators we have the wonderful opportunity of being able to give our young people the information they need before they need it, so that they can:

- Completely trust their body and the process of puberty.
- Understand there is a large range of normal.
- Know what is normal and healthy for their body.
- Know how to take care of themselves well.
- Set up healthy, life-long habits to see them enjoy life to the full.
- Avoid being misled by inaccurate or harmful information elsewhere.

So, when should we start having these conversations?

You might be surprised to know, the concept that bodies change is one that can be gently introduced as early as 3-4 years of age. Little people are very observant! Simple chats highlighting the differences between child and adult bodies and male and female are

important steppingstones to being able to naturally and openly discuss more specific conversations later on. But don’t stress if you feel as though you have missed this opportunity, it is never too late to start the conversation (starting early simply makes it a tad easier).

So, when is it time to really get into the nitty gritty of it? It’s probably time to start having more intentional and informative conversations around 8 years of age. Yes, as young as 7- 8 years of age! Puberty usually begins in girls between 8 and 13 years of age and in boys between 9 and 14 years of age.

For some of us, the thought of having to have these tricky conversations can make us want to hide under a blanket. “I’d rather do anything” or “I’m not cut out for this” might be running on a loop in your brain right now. What if I told you it doesn’t have to be so tricky after all? I would love to share some of my tried-and-true tips with you:

TIP ONE:

To get started, think back to your own puberty education. What did you like about it? What worked well and what didn’t? Most importantly, what do you wish someone told you? Maybe you had to figure out most of it yourself. Drawing from your own experiences is a great place to start the conversation with your puberteer. Tell stories and share from the heart.



TIP TWO:

Make a list of all the things you should talk about when it comes to puberty. Ask your young person/s to choose where they would like to start and go from there. It usually helps to pick something less intrusive like B.O. and deodorant to start with. That way you can work your way up to more difficult topics like erections and periods.

TIP THREE:

If you’re feeling uncomfortable, chances are your little darling is too. So, make it a date. Let your young person/s know what you would like to talk about, how long you will be talking for and then let them choose the location and the treat. Whether it’s a burger or milkshake, a full stomach is always a good way to start.

TIP FOUR:

Resources are great for breaking the ice! Find a book and work through it together or sign up to a webinar so that you can both sit back and enjoy. We run a great “Bloom Session” for mamas and daughters designed to initiate the puberty conversations and open communication pathways. You don’t have to be the expert; you just have to be there.

TIP FIVE:

Start a journal where questions can be asked

in a less awkward way by your young person and answered later by you. Even if you don’t think that they have questions, they do. Trust me. It’s just that quite often by 7-8 years of age, our young people are clued on to what is “appropriate” to talk about and what is “shameful” and so it can appear that their beautiful curiosity has gone underground. Set up some journal-keeping rules like you can ask anything and questions must be answered within 24-48 hours.

Underlying all our conversations surrounding sexual health should always be a strong foundation of worth and identity. Our young people need to know that they are valuable and because they are valuable, their bodies are also valuable and so therefore what they do with their bodies is of significance.

Our young people need to know that their bodies are good, not because of how they look or what they can do, but simply because they exist. Equally important, is that our young people understand that their worth was set immeasurably high the moment they entered this world and there is nothing they can do or anyone else can do or say, that can add to or take away from their worth as a human being.

Puberty is an amazing time of growth, not just physically but also emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It is a time in a young person’s life where they can begin to ask the questions: What kind of person do I want to be? What kind of

choices can I begin making now to become my most favourite version of myself?

Puberty education is so much more than just biology and that’s why Pippin Girl exists.

The Bloom Collection is a visually pleasing (your eyes will thank you), six-part collection designed to layer the conversations surrounding puberty and the transition to womanhood. The collection is considered, wholesome, fair-dinkum and wonderful. It is as much for the mamas as it is for the daughters and is designed to leave you feeling empowered, excited and informed as you journey through this season together. It’s a ripper!

You can shop our entire collection of resources at our website www.pippinggirl.com.au.

Instagram: [@pippin.girl](https://www.instagram.com/pippin.girl)
Facebook: [@Pippinggirl](https://www.facebook.com/Pippinggirl)
Emma Tabacaru
www.pippinggirl.com.au



Self-Esteem: A Necessity, Not a Luxury

In a world brimming with challenges and adversities, your self-esteem acts as an essential compass, guiding you toward a fulfilled and meaningful life. The importance of fostering a healthy sense of self-worth cannot be overstated, as it serves as the foundation for personal growth, mental well-being, and success in various aspects of life.

WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem influences your thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. It is the lens through which you perceive yourself and the world around you. High self-esteem will empower you to face challenges with confidence, embrace your unique qualities, and develop resilience in the face of setbacks. On the contrary, low self-esteem can lead to self-doubt, anxiety, and a hesitance to pursue opportunities.

THE IMPACT OF SELF-ESTEEM

Boosting self-esteem is not an indulgence but a necessary step towards nurturing a healthy and thriving you. When you believe in your worth, you are far more likely to engage in positive behaviours, make more aligned decisions and pursue your aspirations. When you have high self-esteem, you are going to be more compassionate towards yourself and others, creating a more empathetic and understanding community.

On the other hand, low self-esteem can act as a barrier, hindering personal growth and limiting opportunities for success. People with low self-esteem may find themselves trapped in negative thought patterns, constantly questioning their abilities, and comparing themselves unfavourably to others. This self-imposed negativity can create a vicious cycle, eroding their confidence further and impeding their chances of achieving their goals.

8 STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING SELF-ESTEEM

- 1. Practice Self-Compassion:** Work toward treating yourself with the same kindness and empathy that you would offer a friend during times of difficulty or failure. Self-compassion involves acknowledging your imperfections and embracing them as part of being human.
- 2. Celebrate Achievements:** Acknowledging and celebrating all achievements, both small and significant. This will instil a sense of pride and motivation to strive for more.
- 3. Improve Health:** Upgrade your nutrition, incorporate stillness, work on emotional regulation. Improving all areas of health (physical, mental and emotional) will bring a sense of stability to your life and increase your self-respect.
- 4. Challenge Limiting Beliefs:** Identify and challenge limiting beliefs and negative self-talk. It is crucial for breaking free from the grip of low self-esteem. Positive affirmations and reframing negative thoughts can gradually transform your perception of yourself.

5. Set Realistic Goals: Encouraging the pursuit of attainable goals, as achieving them reinforces a sense of competence and capability.

6. Cultivate Supportive Relationships: Surrounding oneself with positive, supportive, uplifting people who encourage personal growth and celebrate achievements. These people bring you up and guide you to bring yourself up.

7. Build Resilience: Failing is an inevitable part of life, and individuals with high self-esteem view failures as opportunities for learning and growth rather than as a reflection of their worth.

8. Avoid Judgement and Comparisons: Resist the temptation to compare yourself to others. Everyone has their unique journey. Comparing yourself to others can lead to feelings of inadequacy. Focus on your progress and growth instead.

Boosting self-esteem is a fundamental endeavour that holds the potential to transform lives positively. As a society, we must recognise the significance of nurturing healthy self-esteem in individuals from a young age, supporting them as they navigate life's challenges. By embracing self-compassion, celebrating achievements, and cultivating supportive relationships, we can empower ourselves and others to embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-belief. Let us foster a culture of confidence, empathy, and resilience to create a world where everyone can flourish, confident in their worth and abilities.

Courtney Asser
www.themindsetproject.com.au

Get Help

Nationwide

The National Cannabis Information & Helpline https://ncpic.org.au/helpline/ 1800 30 40 50	Headspace Chat Online https://eheadspace.org.au/ Online chat available 1800 650 890 (9AM -1AM)	1800RESPECT https://www.1800respect.org.au/ 1800 737 732	Blue Knot Foundation Helpline http://www.blueknot.org.au/Helpline 1300 657 380	Lifeline http://www.lifeline.org.au/ 13 11 14	The Butterfly Foundation http://thebutterflyfoundation.org.au/ 1800 33 4673
Kids Help Line http://www.kidshelp.com.au/ 1800 55 18 00	Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service (VVCS) http://www.dva.gov.au/ 1800 011 046	PANDA - National Perinatal Depression Helpline http://www.panda.org.au/ 1300 726 306	AustralianGovernment: AIHW MHSA http://mhsa.aihw.gov.au/home	SANE Australia http://www.sane.org/ 1800 187 263	Gambling Helpline http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/ Online chat available 1800 858 858
Suicide Call Back Service https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au Online chat available 1300 659 467	Family Drug Support http://www.fds.org.au/ 1300 368 186	Al-Anon http://www.al-anon.org.au/contact 1300 ALANON (1300 252 666)	Alcoholics Anonymous http://www.aa.org.au/ 1300 222 222	Quit Line http://www.quit.org.au/ 13 78 48	Mind Connect https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/contact-us.html 1300 286 463
					Mensline Australia http://www.mensline.org.au/ 1300 78 99 78

Victoria

Youth Drug and Alcohol Advice (YoDAA) https://www.ysas.org.au	Pharmacotherapy, Advocacy, Mediation & Support (PAMS) Advice for anyone experiencing trouble with their pharmacotherapy program (Methadone, Suboxone etc...) 1800 443 844	1800 ICE ADVICE Advice and support for people who use ice, their families and health professionals. 1800 423 238	DirectLine Confidential alcohol and drug counselling and referral line. 1800 888 236	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) A 24-hour confidential information, advice and referral telephone service. 1800 151 045	Ted Noffs Foundation help line Counselling and support for young people and their families.
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New South Wales

Queensland

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Telephone information, counselling and referral. 1800 177 833	Counselling Online If you prefer to speak to someone 1800 177 833 (Regional) 07 3837 5989 (metro)	Alcohol and Drug Support Line 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support Metro: (08) 9442 5050 Country: 1800 653 203
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Western Australia

Parent and Family Drug Support Line 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support. 1800 721 997	Meth Helpline 24/7, state-wide counselling, information, referral and support. 1800 874 878	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) Telephone information, counselling, and referral service. 1300 131 340
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South Australia

ACT

Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) 24-hour telephone service offering information, advice, referral, intake, assessment and support. 02 6207 9977	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) 24-hour Alcohol and Drug Telephone Information and counselling service. 1800 131 350	Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) A 24-hour telephone information and counselling line. 1800 811 994
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Northern Territory

Tasmania

If you are in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000

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