

youthwise



Autumn 2021

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Eco-Grief

WELLBEING

**The nature
based approach**

FEATURED

**Wildlife
Conservation**

OPINION

**Your thoughts
create your
reality.**

FEATURED

Benefits of Yoga

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A letter from the Editor

Welcome to YouthWise Autumn 2021. We are thrilled and honoured to have the APFA and the National Police Memorial on board endorsing Youthwise and mental health from this edition onwards.

To borrow her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth’s expression, 2020 proved to be somewhat an “annus horribilis”. But hopefully we have come out the other side with lessons learned.

For me, at the risk of sounding poetic, the trees are now greener, the sunsets/sunrises more breathtaking and the chirping of the birds more melodic! i.e., I have a new appreciation of the simple things in life. I continue to feel grateful and blessed to be an Australian.

When one looks at countries like Great Britain and The United States (both countries I have lived in) Italy (where my daughters grandparents were born) and of course the shocking situation in India (a country I have extensively travelled through) even though we now face uncertainty and “the new norm”, we are indeed very fortunate to be Australian citizens.

Continuing on that grateful note, we are very grateful for the wonderful and passionate individuals who pen our editorials, the people who make Youthwise what it is-an informative educative and helpful magazine and an attempt at reducing the stigma surrounding mental health.

As part of my job as editor, I read many websites and many editorials. I learn something new EVERY time! The authors of these editorials are passionate about their modality, passionate about educating and helping our young, and that passion shines throughout the pages. On behalf of us all, I thank them for the work they do and the contributions they make.

This edition, is, as always, a mixed bag-from education, conservation, consent, mindfulness, self-defence, wellbeing, girl-power, the myriad of subject matter continues-something for everyone.

And we would be remiss if we did not mention the teachers- the people we entrust our children to, who like our emergency services workers, are the unsung heroes

Quote for this edition:

“A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees”

(A quote from Amelia Earhart)

Be kind to one another and good mental health!

Leigh Mary Leonard
Editor

Youthwise

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Information and opinion articles in this magazine do not constitute, nor are meant to constitute, advice of any kind. If you require advice relating to any of the issues covered in this publication or other issues which could be covered in this publication, you should consult an appropriate health professional.

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headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year-olds. By ensuring help is accessed in early stages of young people's lives and providing a holistic model of support, **headspace** provides a safe space where they can get their mental health and wellbeing back on track.

headspace services cover four core areas: mental health, physical health (including sexual health), work and study support and alcohol and other drug services. Services are confidential, youth friendly and free or low cost. Young people and their families can access services face-to-face at one of 98 **headspace** centres across which can be located Australia at www.headspace.org.au, or via **eheadspace** – a national online and telephone counselling service at www.eheadspace.org.au.

Over the past 10 years, **headspace** has proudly provided over 1.8 million services through centres, online and over the phone, helping over 310,000 young people across Australia. **headspace** wants to ensure young people aged 12-25 have access to youth friendly mental health services, no matter where they live.

Alongside **headspace** centre, online and telephone support, specialised services are provided in the following areas:

- **headspace** School Support – a suicide postvention program, which assists Australian school communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from a suicide.
- Digital Work and Study Service – a dedicated team assisting young people aged 15-24 in education and work options.
- **headspace** Youth Early Psychosis Program – a program focusing on early intervention, aiming to improve the lives of young people, and their families, who are affected by psychosis.

HEADSPACE DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

There are many ways to support **headspace** and the work carried out in providing mental health and wellbeing support, information and services to young people and their families across Australia. **headspace** has helped hundreds of thousands of young people get their lives back on track and your support will assist us with our work.

Any donation generously provided to **headspace** goes towards community engagement and awareness, which can be specifically given towards a local centre or to National Office.

Donations to **headspace** National Office, ensures the promotion of the importance of seeking help, to break down stigma associated with mental health issues and to make sure every young person across Australia, as well as their friends and family, knows there is help available.

You can find out more about donations and fundraising through the 'Get Involved' page at www.headspace.org.au

SEEKING HELP

Getting support can help a young person to keep on track at school, study or work, as well as personal and family relationships. The sooner help is received, the sooner things can begin to improve.

headspace can help any young person aged 12-25 years-old, a family member or friend wanting to seek information on youth mental health.

These are just some of the reasons someone may seek help from headspace:

- If someone is feeling down, stressed or constantly worrying
- If someone doesn't feel like themselves anymore
- If someone isn't coping with school/uni/work or finding it difficult to concentrate
- If someone is feeling sick or worried about their health on alcohol or other drug use
- If someone has questions about, or wants to cut down identity or relationships
- If someone wants to talk about sexuality, gender
- If someone is having difficulties with family or friends
- If someone is concerned about sexual health or wants information about contraception
- If someone is being bullied, hurt or harassed
- If someone is worried about work or study or having money trouble

DID YOU KNOW?

One in four young people have experienced a mental health issue in the past 12 months – a higher prevalence than all other age groups. Alarminglly, suicide is the leading cause of death of young people, accounting for one third of all deaths.

Adolescence and early adulthood is a critical time in a person's life, with 75 per cent of mental health disorders emerging before the age of 25.

ECO-GRIEF: FINDING HOPE AMONGST THE CLIMATE AND WASTE CRISIS



INTRODUCTION

The problems of the world can be overwhelming. The current climate and waste crises that we are facing are big, confronting, existential problems – they threaten humanity’s existence on this planet. Just trying to think about this stuff, let alone taking action, can have a big impact on our mental health. Lots of people are feeling sad, angry, and hopeless. This is a natural and legitimate response now known as Eco-Grief. By looking after ourselves, each other, and the planet we can find a path forward to a sustainable future. Looking after our planet can simply start with how we approach waste and recycling in our homes and schools. Read on to find out what you can do!

BACKGROUND TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

In case you need a little refresher, here is a short background in the climate and ecological crises. Reading this can be confronting, and it’s not meant to scare you. But it’s important to tell the truth.

Climate change is the current rapid warming of the Earth’s climate. This is sometimes called global warming, and more recently – because of the urgency of the situation – the climate crisis (this is how I’ll refer to it throughout this article). Human activity is the major cause of the climate crisis, mostly through the emission of Green House Gases (GHG’s). Carbon dioxide and methane are two commonly known GHGs. There is a natural layer of GHG’s in the Earth’s atmosphere, which lets in sunlight and traps the heat that bounces off the Earth’s surface. Human activity is releasing more GHG’s and thickening the layer in the atmosphere.

For example, the burning fossil fuels which releases carbon dioxide, deforestation and cutting down trees which normally help balance carbon dioxide levels, and dumping lots of waste in landfill which releases GHGs when it breaks down. This is changing the balance of GHG’s in the atmosphere and causing the rising global temperatures we see now. The evidence that human activity is the driving force behind the climate crisis is undeniable, and urgent action is needed to avoid a climate catastrophe.

What are the impacts of the climate crisis?

We are already seeing impacts of the climate crisis around the world. Scientists have been warning of more severe weather events, melting ice, droughts, floods, and bushfires for many years. In Australia, over the summer of 2019/20, we saw some of the worst bushfires we have ever seen. The fires burnt an estimated 18.6 million hectares, destroyed over 5000 buildings, displaced or killed over 3 billion animals, and killed 34 people. The climate crisis did not cause the bushfires, but it made them worse – the land was drier, and the temperature was hotter - the perfect conditions for massive bushfires. Scientists predict that events like this will be more severe and happen more frequently as the climate crisis worsens.

"When we throw something away, we waste all of the resources that were used in the making of that product. This includes the materials, energy, water, land, and labour."

WHAT ABOUT OUR WASTE?

In Australia, we throw away a lot of stuff. The National Waste Report 2020 estimated that Australia generated 74.1 million tonnes of waste in one year from July 2018 – June 2019. And the amount of waste Australian’s are making each year is increasing. This is a major problem.

When we throw something away, we waste all of the resources that were used in the making of that product. This includes the materials, energy, water, land, and labour. The Earth does not have an endless supply of resources. And we are already using more resources each year than the Earth can sustainably regenerate. The Global Footprint Network now estimates that we would need 1.6x Earths to sustain our current way of life. And that last year, humans used up the Earth’s resource budget for the entire year by August 22nd. We need to reduce the toll that humanity is taking on the Earth by reducing the amount we consume, and by re-using and recycling as much of our waste as possible.

The other major issue is waste sent to landfill.

When we throw things away, they often end up in landfill. When the waste is breaking down in a landfill, the decomposing organic material generates methane. Methane is a GHG that contributes to climate change and is about 28x more potent than carbon dioxide. The Australia Bureau of Statistics has estimated that approximately 10% of Australia’s GHG emissions come from landfills.

WHAT IS ECO-GRIEF?

Hearing about and experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis can be really confronting. The effects on humans, animals, plants, ecosystems, and our planet Earth are shocking and difficult to comprehend. This can impact our mental health in many ways as we grapple with coming to terms with the grief associated with climate-related losses to our valued species, ecosystems, and landscapes. The term ‘eco-grief’ (or ecological grief) has been coined to describe this response to ecological loss.

The term ecological grief was defined as “the grief felt in relation to experienced or anticipated ecological losses, including the loss of species, ecosystems and meaningful landscapes due to acute or chronic environmental change” (Cunsolo and Ellis, 2018).

Grief is a normal human response to loss. When someone or something we love dies – a friend, a pet, a grandparent – we grieve. This is a natural and legitimate response to losing someone we love. While it can still be incredibly difficult, we understand that it is normal to grieve the loss of a person. We rarely extend the idea of this kind of grief to our feelings about our natural world. Eco-grief is a natural and legitimate response to the ecological loss you might be seeing on the news or on social media, and even experiencing first-hand. Everyone’s reaction will be unique to them.

You might feel sad, distressed, despairing, angry, fearful, helpless, hopeless, and stressed – or any combination of those feelings. It might make you feel anxious or depressed. It can make you want to switch-off, to stop the hurt and the grief. Feeling these emotions is not a bad thing – it means you care. It means you have empathy for the Earth and problems she faces. Without proper acknowledgement, and proper



channels to express and work through these emotions, they can overpower us. We can get overwhelmed and feel stuck and helpless.

Remembering that you are not alone may be something that really helps. Lots of people, young and old, are muddling their way through anxiety, grief, and stuckness. Collective action, when we all join together and do something, can be a powerful way to not only feel less alone, but also to really make a difference. When we join together we have the power to help with the climate crisis and the feelings that come with it.

WHAT TO DO WITH OUR ECO-GRIEF?

If you are feeling upset or overwhelmed by the climate crisis it’s important to acknowledge what you are feeling. Remember that these emotions are a perfectly normal response to what is happening in the world. It can also be helpful to talk to someone about it – a friend, a parent, a teacher. Ideally someone who will listen and try to understand. It’s important to not let these feelings bottle up inside. Just talking about it with someone will help lighten your mental load.

Getting help from a mental health professional is recommended – talk to your doctor about counselling or a psychologist. There is lots of support out there, especially for young people.

And always look after yourself. Practice some self-care. This can look different for everyone, and what works for your friends might not work for you. Below are some basic self-care ideas, but do what is right for you:

- Take a break – while you might feel a sense of urgency to do something, we can’t solve everything right now. Pause, re-set, and start over.
- Breathe – take 3 deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. This will flood your brain with oxygen and help calm your mind.

- Exercise – whatever works for you: walking, running, tennis, football, yoga

- Eat well – eat something healthy and nourishing. Lots of vegetables!

- Sleep – our bodies and minds don’t function very well if we don’t get enough sleep. Take a nap if you need to. And try to get as much sleep as is good for you.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

Any small action that we take counts. There are lots of different actions that we can all take. Not all of them will suit everyone. However, any positive action we take is doing a little bit of good. We can’t solve the climate crisis on our own, we can only do it together. Together with other individuals, businesses, corporations, NGO’s, and governments. Together we can change the world.

Here’s a few ideas to get started:

- Join the movement! There are lots of people all over Australia that are taking action on climate change. You could join your school environment club, or a School Strike 4 Climate. Do some research into what groups are active in your local area, and sign up!
- Walk or ride to school (reduce the number of car trips you take)
- Switch to renewable energy (use clean and green energy at home and at school)
- Eat more vegetables in your diet (eating more vegetables is healthier, and better for the planet!)
- Buy less plastic (plastic is made from fossil fuels)
- Buy less stuff (we consume a lot of stuff, and lots of it ends up getting wasted)
- Recycle (steel, aluminum, glass, hard plastic,



paper/cardboard)

- Start composting or worm-farming (food scraps)

- Choose a bank that invests in renewable energy (make your money do good for the planet)

- Vote (when your 18)

Collective Action – the climate crisis is not any one person’s problem to solve by themselves. We cannot do it alone. The most powerful thing you can is add your voice and your actions to the movement. Together we can all put pressure on the people with power – governments, corporations, businesses – to make meaningful and sustainable change.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THE WASTE PROBLEM?

The answer is simple – we need to stop sending so much waste to landfill and Reduce, Reuse and Recycle our rubbish. In fact, there is no such thing as waste – all waste is a resource! Everything that we throw away as rubbish actually has the potentially to be used again. We can look to the Waste Hierarchy to understand how we can think about our waste:

1. AVOID – the best thing we can do is to avoid making waste in the first place. For example, if you make good choices when you shop for food – such as buying loose bananas instead of packaged bananas – you can avoid creating any plastic packaging waste! We can also do things like storing our food in air-tight containers so it doesn’t go off,
2. REDUCE – reducing the amount of waste that we make is pretty easy. For example, if we purchase the right amount of food and serve the right amount on our plates, we can drastically reduce the amount of food waste we make.

Continued >

3. REUSE – there are lots of options for reusing. For example you can use a reusable water bottle or a coffee cup, take reusable shopping bags to the shopping center.

4. RECYCLE – you can recycle lots of the materials that are used in our products. The Top 5 materials that you can recycle are steel, aluminum, glass, hard plastic, and paper/ cardboard. If we all use our yellow-lidded recycling bin correctly we can save a lot of materials from going to landfill. Confused about recycling? Check out www.cleanaway.com/greenius to learn how to become a recycling eco-champ, or search for “Greenius” online.

i. Recycling can also include recycling your food scraps – you can do this with a compost bin, worm farm, bokashi bin. Some local Council have specialized bins for food scraps.

5. DISPOSE – the last option is to dispose of something in the red rubbish bin. Sometimes we have waste that needs to go in the red rubbish bin. This is always a good opportunity to assess ways to try and avoid this waste in the future.

Remember – all waste is a resource! There’s no such thing as waste!

Other waste tips:

- Always check with your Local Council as to what can go in your recycling bins. Some Councils have different systems.

- Remember to only put clean and dry items in your recycling bin – there should be no food scraps or liquids left in your recyclables. They should also be loose – NOT in a plastic bag.

- Tricky to dispose of items, such as batteries and lightbulbs, can often be recycled at your local Community Recycling Centre

- Recycle your soft plastics, such as plastic bags and chip packets, by taking them back to the supermarkets (Coles and Woolworths) and putting them in the Redcycle bin

- Check for the Australasian Recycling Label to see if you can recycle your items

Greenius – a new way to learn about your bins. Greenius is a new e-learning platform for people to learn about recycling, contamination, and how to make the most of their waste services. It includes games, quizzes, and fun learning modules.

Search “Greenius” online, or visit www.cleanaway.com.au/greenius

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT WASTE

While Australia is still generating a lot of waste,

and lots of it is ending up in landfill, there is still some good news! The waste industry employs lots of people whose job it is to try and find solutions for these problems. Some of these solutions include:

Organics Recycling – some Local Councils in Australia have started collecting and recycling organic food waste. Some have started Food Organics collections, others have FOGO (Food Organics Garden Organics) collections. This means that they can recycle the food and organic waste and turn it into compost. Compost is used in gardens and farms to regenerate the soil – adding precious nutrients, increasing the water holding capacity, adding healthy bacteria and microbes, and locking carbon in the soil. Recycling organics can happen in several ways. Two common ones are:

- Composting – a process of letting organic material break down over a number of weeks/ months in the ideal conditions for it to turn into healthy compost.

- Anaerobic Digestion (AD) – organic waste is added to a large tank with lots of water. The organic material is turned into a sludge and can be dried and used as fertilizer, while any gas that is produced can be captured and used for energy. This process is similar to what happens in a human stomach.

Landfill Gas Capture – some landfills in Australia are now capturing the GHG’s (like methane) that are emitted from them. Instead of releasing the gas into the atmosphere, the gas is captured in pipes and can be used to make energy or power garbage trucks.

Bioplastics – single-use plastics are a huge problem. Normal plastics take hundreds or thousands of years to breakdown. Every piece of plastic that has ever been created is still present somewhere on Earth, and it’s estimated that by 2050 the amount of plastic in the ocean will weigh more than all of the fish! Bioplastics are a new type of plastic that have been created – some are made from cornstarch, others from a material called PLA. These bioplastics can be broken down in an industrial composting system or an anaerobic digester.

Circular Economy – is a new concept that describes a systemic, holistic approach to an economic system that is aimed at eliminating waste and keeping materials in continual use. The whole

economy – from big and small business, designers and manufacturers, producers and consumers – can work together to design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use, and regenerate natural systems.

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE!

We are facing some big problems. The climate and waste crises are not going to solve themselves, and they can make us feel overwhelmed and hopeless. Acknowledging these feelings of eco-grief is not submitting to despair, it’s not giving up. We need to look after ourselves, and each other. There is a path forward – it includes working together and doing whatever we can to help.

On finding hope amongst the chaos, Gail Bradbrook, an environmental activist, said “I can’t think of anything else I would rather do with my life. It is such an honour to try. What else can we all do?”

About the Author: Andrew Snedden is an environmental educator. He works on educating communities on waste and environmental issues, and how to take action to make a sustainable future possible. He has a Master of Environmental Science from the University of Sydney.

Please contact the author for a full list of references.

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How personalised learning support can help build confidence for life

Written by Dr Selina Samuels

WHEN we talk about personalised learning, we are referring to an approach to learning which focuses on the needs of each individual learner. It is in contrast to (and in many cases an antidote) to the traditional classroom model with which we are all familiar. While educational systems, schools and teachers have made huge strides away from a one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum delivery and student support, the diversity of learners in each classroom in the country presents daily challenges to personalisation.

In recent research conducted by Cluey Learning, 77% of parents surveyed reported that they believe that the education system still takes a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning. Sometimes the pace of learning in the classroom can mean children fall behind or become disengaged because they aren’t being sufficiently challenged. And, over time, lack of engagement can have a dramatic adverse impact on a student’s confidence. Students are inclined to translate difficulties they may have keeping up in class into a wholesale decision that they are “stupid”, while students who find the pace of class too slow may lose interest and confidence in learning altogether.

Confidence is a mindset. It’s about looking at every situation as an opportunity to learn and improve. It’s about knowing that you’ve

“got this”, but not feeling downhearted or discouraged if you don’t. When kids struggle with their studies, their confidence is one of the first things to take a hit. A lack of confidence can then extend far beyond the classroom and impact other areas of a child’s life.

Personalised learning and the classroom

It is no simple matter to accommodate the needs of 25 or 30 unique learners at the same time, which is the reality of most classrooms. Often the need to cover specific curriculum requirements dominates at the expense of the needs of the individual learner. My experience as a teacher and working with schools across the world tells me that most teachers believe that there is an inverse relationship between the size of their class and the amount of personalised attention they can offer each student – which stands to reason, really. Teachers also understand that to really thrive as learners, most students need to learn at the pace that suits them, going as fast or slowly as needed for each concept they are studying, and to be seen and heard by their teachers. Not only do these strategies support academic achievement, importantly they build each student’s sense of their capacity to learn.

In order to provide the necessary 1-to-1 support, classroom structures need to enable more small group and individual interaction

with the teacher, greater deployment of teachers assistants, or families need to find ways to access this kind of support outside the classroom. Acknowledging each student’s unique learning needs through personalised support is a great way to balance and enhance the other benefits of learning as part of a larger social group in the classroom.

The value of being allowed to make mistakes

At Cluey, we hear again and again from our students that they are reluctant to put their hands up in class to ask a question in front of their peers. They don’t want to reveal what they don’t know. And they will never ask a question more than once! But we know that sometimes it takes a few different approaches to a problem before you know how to solve it. In contrast, in a 1-to-1 context, students can ask as many questions as they need to – or ask the same question as many times as they need to – without any embarrassment or fear that they might interrupt anyone else’s learning. The environment is a safe space to ask questions and also to make mistakes, because as all teachers know, making mistakes can be the best way to learn. It may sound strange, but making mistakes is also a great way to build student confidence.

Continued >

Metacognition

With personalised support, students gain experience in talking about their learning with an educator. With this enhanced understanding and objectivity, children feel that they not only have the power to speak up about an area they are struggling with, but they also have confidence that they will eventually conquer it.

Educators call this ability to understand and explain one’s own learning ‘metacognition’ and it is a hugely important factor in learning how to learn. Giving students the skills to speak objectively about themselves as learners is a great way to build their independence and confidence. In short, personalised learning gives students the skills to solve their own problems in the future.

Meeting student where they are

Educators talk about ‘meeting students where they are,’ which really means to start students with material and concepts that are familiar and accessible and extend them from there. That way, learning can build on solid foundations and each student’s capacity and confidence can develop gradually. When you link learning

with previous knowledge and skills, students are more likely to see the connections across subjects, which will also help them to embed and recall what they know. This is also a great way to activate genuine intellectual curiosity – which will in turn lead students to be eager to learn and have more confidence in themselves as learners. Meeting each student where they are is hard to do in a busy classroom, and again points to the value of a personalised approach to and environment for learning.

Finding joy in learning

The joy of learning comes when a student starts to really ‘get’ a concept they previously struggled with and feels a sense of personal achievement. It can also be experienced with a student feels a connection or develops a personal identification with a text or concept. Children have a natural curiosity, but sometimes the dynamic of the classroom, with its social complexity, can curb it. Personalised learning is a great way to nurture and build children’s innate curiosity, so they thrive and actually enjoy learning rather than just going through the motions. It is all about helping students have those a-ha moments that mean they identify learning with feelings of happiness and

confidence. If they find joy in learning, they will continue to be enthusiastic learners, which will help them to be happy and fulfilled for the rest of their lives.

Written by Cluey Learning’s Chief Learning Officer, Dr Selina Samuels

www.clueylearning.com.au



“IF IT WEREN’T FOR
RED FROGS,
I DON’T THINK
I’D BE HERE
— TODAY.”



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Gaining two steps forward for wellbeing accomplishments**

Is our path meant to lead to a particular destination?

Along the way we search for our unique inner strength. It is this same beneficial energy that motivates us to discover our mental health and wellbeing , in a world where he pace of change requires the elasticity of thoughts and taking initiative. Via The Art of Creative Thinking™ Model, when we view the same familiar landscape through a

new perspective, finding unconventional solutions and developing innovative ideas. It is a continual process in which we have investigated, developed, studied, practised and guided (hands on, online and hybrid) programs, courses and workshops in creative thinking, using expression tools unique to the language of visual art.

The ambition is to reveal and strengthen the potential and internal resources, akin to the ways in which a sculptor hews in a block of marble to reveal the statue hidden inside.

The Model provides a safety net that secures a space for freely experimenting, erring and correcting, while supporting each and every participant to choose their own way

to improve their capabilities and authentic personal expression: individually and within group work.

It is a fun and fascinating creative training of curiosity for the eyes, brain and hands.
The courage to choose, dare and share!

The following is the opportunity to accompany you as a reader, teacher or principal on a journey behind the scenes at The Art of Creative Thinking™ Model.

The Art of Creative Thinking Model™

This unique model tears down all barriers for children, youth and adults to allow an open environment for expressing their ideas and problem solving in conditions of uncertainty.

The Model in which the practical experiences operate through countless activities, was developed through a constant dialogue with the philosophical ideas that were examined as part of academic research into visual literacy.

The Art of Creative Thinking™ Model incorporates and contains the three components of human wellbeing: emotional, mental and applicable.

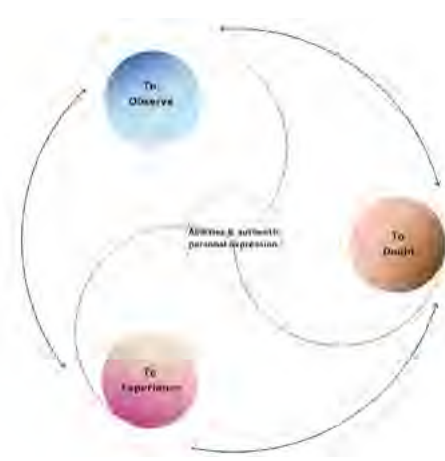
Five Circles of Support for improving wellbeing

To Observe

How does visual expression become part of the resources of our inner strength?

"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order to learn how to do it." – Pablo Picasso

The visual language invites participants to generate their thoughts and feelings, rather than simply talk about them.



The Art of Creative Thinking™ Model



The courage to choose, dare and share!

In order to initialise the creation process, a pause is required from the continuity of speech in order to allow space for contemplative observation of emotions.

To Doubt

How to open up to new questions that evoke thought and expression in visual language?

"When people are able to identify and put together their needs, they will be able to pair them with clear tasks to address them". Rosenberg (2003).

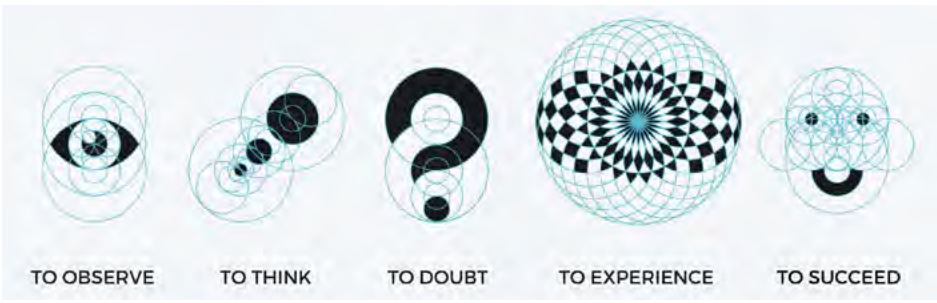
Doubting enables the re-examination of the decision making process. The participants turn a full stop into a question mark: why? And actually, why not?

These questions help refine the choice and adopt new perspectives.

To Experience

How does visual expression create a personal diary, akin to a pulse clock that checks our internal rhythm?

"It is desirable that learners from kindergarten through to tertiary studies carry out creative projects, rather than be satisfied with merely raising original ideas." (Runco & Jaeger, 2012).Experimentation creates a developmental sequence that demonstrates to participants the meaning of their journey through the entire creative process. The visual product is akin to a seismograph that acts as a testimonial at a given moment, for participants themselves.



To break internal barriers

How does one develop the ability to have opposing and conflicting thoughts, sensations, and feelings while concurrently taking action?

"Important conditions for creative thinking include the release of inhibitions, fears and prejudices." (De Bono, 1978). It is important to remember these words as spoken by the renowned artist Henri Matisse: "one shade represents colour, two shades represent life itself." Life is complex but if we observe the shades that comprise it, we will manage to overcome internal barriers.

Abilities and authentic personal expression

How many years did Leonardo Da Vinci require to paint the Mona Lisa? Did he purely paint or did he correct his mistakes?

"You can't just talk about creativity, you must fully experience it" Diti Avdar Yeger, 1999

The Art of Creative Thinking™ Model is a growing process. The level of ability and the authentic personal expression of participants at the closing point of each practise cycle, elaborates and initiates the starting point of the next practise cycle.

It is a process that nourishes the participants and leads to growth and renewal.

References:
Rosenberg, M. (2003). Non-violent communication: A language of life. Encinitas, CA: Puddledancer Press.

Runco, M.A., & Jaeger, G J. (2012). The standard definition of creativity. Creativity Research Journal, 24, 92–96.

De Bono, E. (1978). Teaching Thinking. London: Penguin Books.

By: Adam Avdar Yeger founder and owner
Dya The Art of Creative Thinking™ since 1999
Expanded to Australia in 2019
www.dyaaustralia.com.au

Partner Dance:

and the many surprising benefits from fitness to spirituality to neurological health

When we say partner dance, we mean dances where there are two people dancing with each other – often in a close embrace. Usually a man and a woman, but there is a good chance that there have been more same sex couples in history – more on that later though.

In this article I am going to share some information on partner dance in general along with why it can be so beneficial to so many in so many ways. It might sound like a miracle drug, but trust me – at the end of this article you will not think of partner dance the same way again.

The basic benefits of partner dance

It is probably not that surprising that there can be some physical benefits from partner dance. It will not make you an ultramarathon runner, but it will make you healthier. Especially for many youths today with the increased rate of childhood obesity. Partner dance is also called social dance. That means you should be able to do it all night – while socialising. However, it was developed at a time when most people had physical jobs and low-calorie diets. That means you should be able to do it all night when you have the level of fitness. Many people today can find partner dance a physical challenge – and that’s why it can be a great entry level fitness strategy.

And it is also basic, physical activity for the whole body. Certainly you need to use your legs a lot, but you need to use your arms and your body to communicate with your partner – more about this unique form of communication later. This use of your body and arms means a complete work out. So you can burn some calories by dancing. And counter the effects of the modern sedentary life – especially all that sitting.

Social skills – you don’t need them, but you will get them

As I said before, partner dance is also called social dance. It is a tool to help people socialise. And it helps a lot.

Does a man need a “pickup line” to approach a woman? No – he can simply say ‘would you like to dance?’. That’s pretty easy to do. And it is never cliché – it’s really the only thing you can say. A man can now easily start a social interaction with a woman – or women – and then see where it leads.

Does a woman need to worry about what to talk about and social awkwardness with the wrong man? No – she simply dances. And because dances only go for a few minutes, it is not a major commitment to say yes. And that’s probably why women always say yes. At the end of the dance, she can say thank you and return to her friends. Ready to meet another. Or she might even suggest they dance again later. Or simply wait to see if he asks again.

Each dance is a new social interaction. It’s only a matter of time until you have met a number of people. And usually not much time. Pretty quickly you have had a number of interactions with different people. This means to things:

- 1. You have likely found someone you can connect with
- 2. You have by default improved your social skills simply from those interactions

You have been social and you have been socialised.

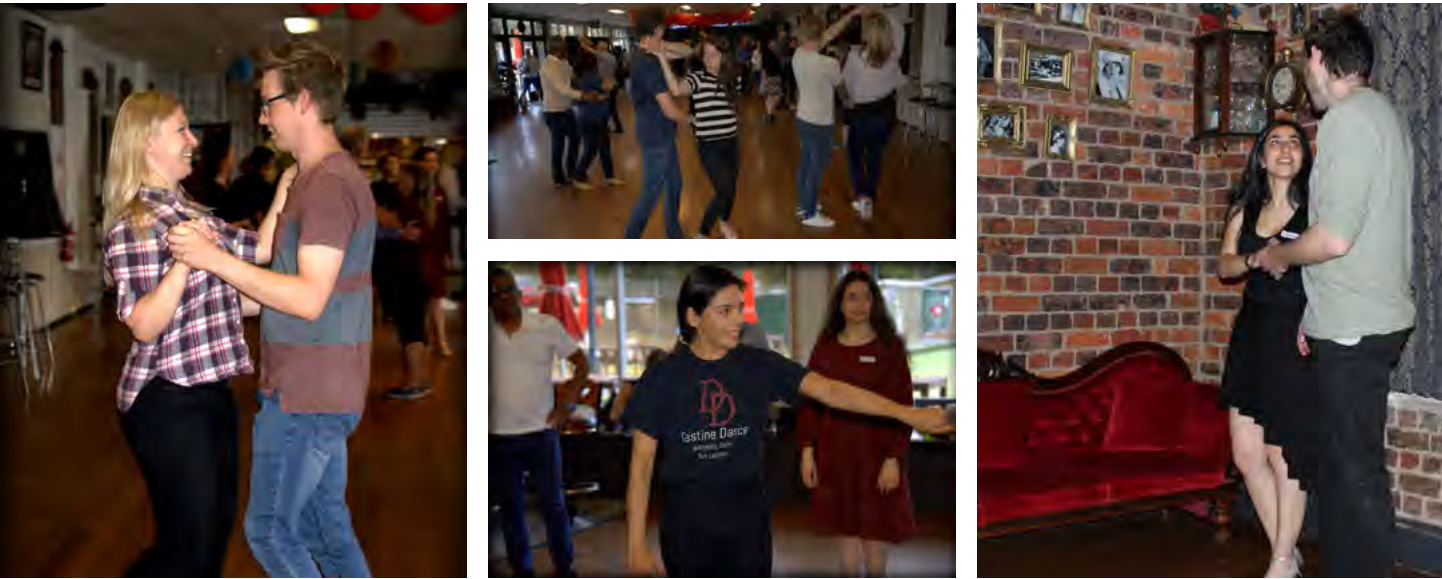
And within a context between the sexes. Therefore, dance can also lead to more respectful and satisfying romantic relationships.

Self-awareness – from your physical form to your emotional self

Because dance requires physical coordination, it makes you much more aware of your body. You will be able to feel more nuanced movement within your body. That will make you more aware of and more connected to your physical form. By being more connected with yourself, you become more ready to understand yourself mentally.

One of the elements of partner dance that you might not be aware of is musicality. This is where you do more than simply execute the dance figures. You execute them in a way that suits the nature of the music. And maybe only the ones that suit the music. This works by listening to the music, understanding the feelings it induces and then expressing those feelings in your movements. It could be subtle, like the way you lower after a wise or how much you extend into a flourish. Or it might be the way you actually take each step.

The end effect is that you need to connect to your feelings, express them and interpret those of your partner who is doing the same. You then



become aware of your emotional response relative to others. And your emotional state become more evident to you.

When you understand yourself on the physical and emotional level – you are getting ready to understand yourself on higher levels.

Tactile awareness

This was implied above, but it deserves its own attention.

When you dance with another, you make considerable contact. That means touch. Not many think about it, but touch is a universal language and the first one we communicate with. It is also a language we often are denied and lose due to culture.

It is probably no surprise that those cultures that enjoy partner dancing the most – the Latin cultures – are also those that are closer and include more physical contact in social interactions.

No matter the culture though, dance provides a respectful and open environment where we can exercise this part of being human. You feel more complete when you can communicate with others through touch. The unique form of communication I mentioned earlier.

Sense of achievement and confidence

Partner dance is also called ballroom dancing. And there are many comparisons between ballroom and ballet. One of my favourites is summarise below:

Ballet makes hard things look easy; ballroom makes hard things look easy

When you (or anyone learns partner dancing) it does not take long for you to start doing things that look impressive. Then it’s not long until you can start going for awards and being certified at progressively higher levels of dance. You can even get involved in dancesport and compete – almost from the start.

Because you have achieved something that looks so impressive, you feel both a sense of achievement and confidence.

That alone is good, but because it is done in a social context, you will feel more confident with others. This confidence in yourself around others compliments the improved social skills mentioned earlier.

Spiritual development

Dance is often associated with spiritualism. Partner dancing too can have this association. You feel connected with the music. This expands your sense of self awareness. You then feel part of something more. Because partner dance is done with another – you feel this with another. That enhances the experience even further again.

Neurological benefits

The Albert Einstein School of medicine did a longitudinal study of people in their 70s. They found a group that had a 76% chance reduction in developing Alzheimer’s. This group was the dancers. The reason suggested to explain this was that dance demands the following:

- Attention to the music
- Control of the body
- Social connection with your partner
- Attention to the dance floor – if you are leading
- Attention to your partner’s signals – if you are following

These all activate different parts of the brain at the same time. That makes it excellent brain exercise. The benefit was not only better than anything else considered, but it was almost better than the next two items (reading and crosswords) combined. If you want to care for your brain, then dance. But it needs to be partner dance and partner dance the requires improvisation (not repeating the same routine).

Overall wellness

By now you should understand how much partner dance can offer. That can make someone feel much better about themselves in general. And that means an improvement in overall wellness. And that’s what many people say about learning dance. They just feel better. It’s a combination of the endorphins that are released from any physical activity and all of the above.

Continued >

Same sex dancing – a history you might not know about

I said I would talk about this earlier so here it is.

The first thing I should let you know is how unique partner dancing is. First off – it pretty much only developed in Europe (and then spread). There are only one or two examples of partner dancing developing in other cultures. And nothing like ballroom. Also, considering the duration of human history and dance, partner dance is relatively new. You are lucky to live in a time and place to even know what partner dance is.

Second, much of the development of dance was done by men working together to come up with new moves. Much like a men’s shed, but dance focused. Tango in Argentina is a classic example of this. Women would often learn how to dance from their mothers. Dance was often a pass time in colonial places where there would be more men than women (if there were any women at all). That men danced with men – the men with the least facial hair would be the follows (the term was being ‘heifered’).

Thus, same sex dancing is not – historically speaking – rare or unusual. And accommodating it is nothing much to ask for.

Ways to engage youth in dance

The easiest way is to simply take a youth to a dance lesson. Certainly for a boy to learn such a thing from a female instructor in private lessons would be an excellent avenue to teach dance as well as provide positive influential woman in his life. Don’t expect too much from the instructor

though – I have seen some mothers start leaning on the instructor outside of class to assist with various issues their son has. Try to keep it all in class.

In its original form partner dance is something that a father could do, appropriately, with his daughter. It is simply meant to be social. And I have had father daughter students before – it was because the daughter had said no to every other physical activity suggested to her, but still – who enjoyed the weekly time together.

You can also ask your school to organise a regular dance event. At first it might seem a bit twee, but the above reasons are justification enough to make dance a part of any school’s activities.

You can also ask a school to make dance part of the physical education curriculum. A teacher who works at my studio teaches regularly at a high school where students learn to dance and then are expected to create their own choreography – further expanding the experience that dance can offer.

Of course, there is the traditional debutante balls. I have noticed the standard of these events declining. Thus, another avenue is to ensure that your child’s school takes the dances at these events seriously. Ensuring a high standard of training so the benefits I mentioned above are offered.

Written by Clint Steele
Destine Dance
www.destinedance.com.au

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- Non-al drink demonstrations

- Speakers

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Victoria’s Drug Free Lifestyle program aims to build resilience in young people

THE drug education program Drug Free Lifestyles has been operating in Victoria for multiple decades. Of course, the program has developed over time, and is now based on a lively and interactive PowerPoint presentation and includes the use of anatomically accurate healthy and damaged models of body organs, videos, experiments, and discussion to highlight the effects on the human body of alcohol and tobacco and in secondary schools, cannabis and other illicit drugs, particularly ice.

The program is directed to senior Primary and all levels of Secondary students and works particularly effectively with years 7 and 8. The program emphasizes giving students the latest evidence-based peer-reviewed research so that they can make wise and informed decisions.

The program commences with a working definition of a drug (“A chemical that is not a food that changes the way the body works”) and continues student interaction asking for all the drugs they can think of. Secondary students are introduced to the different types of drugs (stimulants, depressants and hallucinogens, or Uppers, Downers and Warpers.)

This flows naturally into which are the deadliest, and surprisingly for many students, it is not the illicit, but the legal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, and increasingly, abused prescription medication.

Are students aware that chemically alcohol is a poison to the human body (the give- away is INTOXICATED)?

While the little science experiment is brewing, students are shown firstly healthy body organ models, then heavily alcohol damaged models (liver and kidney: shrunken and distorted; and heart: grossly swollen). A bit of physiology emphasizes the importance of our body organs: the liver controlling & regulating delivery of nutrients around the body. Long term alcohol abuse turns this fantastic chemical computer into “a big bag of scar tissue”, which the students readily agree is not going to be delivering

the body’s nutritional needs at all. The hopeful news is that if there is healthy tissue, the liver can regenerate & heal itself, but there is no healthy tissue in the damaged liver model used in the demonstration, & this disease, cirrhosis of the liver is a terminal condition.

This flows naturally into the role of the kidneys: cleaning up after the body organs take what they need from the nutrients the liver has sent out, an essential job, because these “left-overs” are often toxic to us. The importance of good hydration is emphasized to support the kidneys in their role. We have 2 kidneys when we can function perfectly with only one, but the problem is there is no way to give the body the message “Watch out for the alcohol, & make sure it only damages one kidney, keep the other one healthy for me.” No, long term heavy drinking will damage both kidneys, & such a person is in danger of drowning in their own poisons, again, a terminal condition.

Having seen two shriveled organs, when the damaged heart comes out, swollen & engorged, there is real surprise. But in this case bigger is not better. How does alcohol do this damage? The alcohol damages the heart tissue in 3 ways: 1, making the red blood cells “sticky” or “tacky” so that they take longer to deliver the oxygen as they get slowed down in the tiny capillaries which is the end point for delivering the oxygen to the body cells. The brain quickly becomes aware that the heart is not working as effectively as it should (the reduced oxygen to the brain cells is a bit of a give-away!)

So the brain sends messages to the heart to work harder: the muscle is already damaged & the pumping is not as effective, setting up a vicious feedback loop. That is the 2nd type of damage. The 3rd is the size of the heart in the chest cavity, which the students can usually identify as the think about where the heart sits in the chest next to the lungs, so with cramped lungs this person’s breathing is no longer going to be as efficient, further reducing the crucial oxygen supplies to the body, another vicious feedback loop.



Medical scan images are used to make the point for brain damage. The students are readily able to identify the visible differences between the healthy & damaged brain images. And this damage is irreversible: damaged brain cells are not replaced.

Furthermore, the human brain does not fully mature until a person is in their mid-twenties, so any damage done from dangerous substances before this time means a person will not reach their full potential.

After covering long term damage, the program moves on to the immediate dangers, crucial information for this age group, so standard drinks are explained and the effects of increasing levels of intoxication through to death: if alcohol is poison what is the potentially lethal dose? .5% alcohol in the blood, ie 10 times the legal limit, & people have died at this level of intoxication. This is a good spot for a brain break, stepping outdoors if possible, to watch a few students try the “beer goggles” which brings the dangers home, (gross motor impairment by unsteady gait, fine motor impairment by struggling to match fingertip to fingertip. particularly emphasizing drink driving. There is usually the opportunity of a turn at the goggles for all who want it after the presentation is finished.

Then comes the program’s most important take home message: Standard Drinks based on National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines: **"There is no level of drinking alcohol that can be guaranteed to be completely “safe” or “no risk”** (a direct cut and paste quote from the NHMRC

The program touches briefly on responsible sexual behaviour by challenging both sexes to take responsibility for future partners by considering the impact of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

The results of the science experiment are checked and discussed (long-term alcohol damage in the body commences with chronic dehydration).

A bit of maths practice is provided in looking at the cost of smoking and

what a person can spend on themselves and their families if they don’t.

Illicits, particularly Ice and Cannabis are discussed, with some vivid before & after photos of the appalling effects of Ice on a young person’s looks, and discussion of the “Russian Roulette” dangers of serious mental health conditions such as Schizophrenia (ie, totally unpredictable) before the program winds up with a Strengths-Based message to counter the effects of Peer Pressure by cherishing and celebrating every student’s individuality.

Drug Free Lifestyles is the education arm of the widely respected long-term activist not-for profit WCTU association.

Dawn Stark
Drug Free Lifestyles

www.wctu.com.au

Consent in education: The time for action is now

By Delvene Neilson

Earlier this year, Sydneysider Chanel Contos kickstarted a nationwide reckoning on consent in schools. Her Instagram poll snowballed into a national conversation around how we teach young people about consent.

Ms Contos' petition for Australian schools to teach consent in sex education from an earlier age has gathered more than 40,000 signatures. She has also received 6,000 testimonies from those who believe inadequate consent education is the reason for their sexual abuse during school or in the years following.

The campaign captured the attention of Greens MP Jenny Leong, Liberal MP Felicity Wilson and Labour MP Marjorie Green. They have given their time and attention to a new petition led by Ms Contos, urging the state government to improve the sex education curriculum and reform consent laws.

Ms Contos has since worked with NSW Police to launch Operation Vest, an informal way to report a sexual assault without initiating a criminal investigation. This process empowers victims to have their account recorded and get closure. It can also support future victims in cases where the perpetrator is a repeat offender.

A new narrative has emerged strongly, of a need for serious change, and looking to the future. Schools have an enormous opportunity, and responsibility, to be part of the change society needs, and many acknowledge they need to do more to educate students about consent. Reading the testimonies at teachusconsent.com shows that hoping to do better won't be enough to make an impact.

The media, parents, students, and the broader community are now looking to schools to take action. The reality is, teaching students about consent doesn't need to be difficult. Up until now, the educational response has been lacklustre, filled with overbearing metaphors



and unnecessary allegory.

The federal government's infamous 'milkshake' campaign, for example, overcomplicated a simple concept. Sexual assault prevention campaigners said elements of the material trivialised an important issue by using metaphors such as smearing a milkshake, tacos, and shark-infested waters. The videos failed to directly reference sex, rape or assault, leaving young people and educators confused.

So, what is the best approach to teaching consent in the classroom?

Educators are in the unique position of facilitating important and sometimes challenging conversations with their students. ClickView's series of free videos and lesson plans about respectful relationships has been designed to support teachers. Engaging videos explore privacy, sex-shaming, victim-blaming, and recognising the differences between pornography and reality. Lessons include activities focused on consent and respecting boundaries.

At ClickView we are careful not to shy away from discussing difficult topics, but we do so in an age-appropriate and realistic way. We are clear on the issues, and reinforce the simple concepts of consent without fluff or analogy. On the topic of consent, students learn that not saying no is not the same as saying yes. They also learn the difference between a reluctant and enthusiastic 'yes', and how they can withdraw consent at any time.

Lessons around consent, sexuality, and relationships are a requirement of the national curriculum. However, how and when those lessons are taught is at each school's discretion. To teach these important lessons successfully, schools around the country need to use quality respectful relationships resources. Without proper consent education, high levels of sexual assault will continue. What's more,

the repercussions will be felt far and wide for victims, their friends and the wider community.

The world today is not the same world that it was fifty, thirty or even five years ago, and educational content needs to reflect those changes. It is not enough to rely on one body to action these changes, it is up to each individual - parents, students, community leaders and education professionals - to identify the needs of young people today, and come together to make those changes. Schools play a significant and important role in delivering these messages, but the true benefits are seen when we connect and partner together, to support each other on these troubling issues.

While the conversation with young people around consent can feel uncomfortable, it's far more uncomfortable to not take action or to see first hand the consequences of miseducation. It's an educator's job to create a safe space for students to discuss these issues openly and enthusiastically, where ideas and feelings can be shared free of judgement. With the right resources in place, that job becomes a whole lot easier.

About Delvene Neilson

Delvene is a parent, experienced educator and the Head of Customer Success at ClickView.

Championed as 'the Netflix of education', ClickView is an online education company that provides over 4,500 schools, colleges and universities with access to world-class, interactive curriculum-aligned video resources. Over 70% of secondary schools in Australia use ClickView to access innovative and impactful online content. New video releases, produced in collaboration with teachers and subject experts, are added to the library every six weeks.

www.clickview.com.au

Equine Assisted Therapy

While life skills and social emotional learning research continues to evolve, there are many known benefits experienced by young people and their educators when these teachings are encouraged.

Life skills have been defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". Life skills are associated with managing and living a better quality of life and increasing an individual's personal growth and awareness. When young people learn and develop social, emotional and interpersonal skills, it promotes positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.

"SEL is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success. People with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially. From effective problem-solving to self-discipline, from impulse control to emotion management and more, SEL provides a foundation for positive, long-term effects on children, adults, and communities. Children thrive. Schools win. Workplaces benefit. Society strengthens. All due to social-emotional learning." - Committee For Children

More than ever our young people are feeling lost, alone, misunderstood, anxious, worried, directionless and pressure from many different areas of their lives.

At a time in life when they should be joyfully discovering their authentic selves; discovering how to regulate their emotions; learning about how to lead their lives and build resilience through challenges; learning about what it means to develop self-serving boundaries and a healthy self esteem... the statistics show that mental health issues, depression and anxiety are on the rise in our young people.

It has been said that, "not everyone needs therapy, but everyone benefits from developing life skills". This includes the development

of self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship/ interpersonal skills and decision making skills. These are transferrable skills that are vital for social, school, work and life success.

While there are many different mediums for teaching life skills to young people, a unique and successful modality has been growing in popularity. Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) is an effective approach to human development that encourages individual and team growth, through objective- driven programs.

Why Horses?

When children are given the opportunity to participate in experiential learning, their learning potential increases exponentially. In this case, the horse becomes the teacher and the outdoor nature-based setting becomes the classroom. Horses are a prey animal and are acutely attuned to their surroundings. There is no pulling around a 500kg prey animal! To effectively complete the EAL programs, participants learn to strengthen their leadership ability, their understanding of themselves and others and their communication styles. Horses are incredible teachers because they exist in the moment. They don't connect with the past or the future and require participants to draw their focus and attention to the present moment. Horses are consistently reacting to stimulus provided by participants (behaviour, skills, energy, attitude and intent), moment by moment.

The honest and immediate feedback from the horses to individuals and teams of people that work together is a rare window of opportunity for personal evaluation and self-reflection, and uncovers what skills the participants would benefit from developing, as well as what internal shifts the participant needs to make to allow the horse to feel safe, and choose to trust, respect and follow the participant. Horses provide feedback that parallels our own behaviour, skills and attitude.

One of the joys associated with working around horses are they don't judge, but they constantly assess and provide feedback. The non-judgemental aspect in this work has been a crucial part of teens feeling

Continued >

safe in sharing more of their authentic selves and their vulnerabilities as they work through the programs.

Horses are hard-wired with in-built herd behaviours. These behaviours require us to strengthen our human attributes such as trust, respect, understanding, team work and communication in order to achieve the objectives and work successfully with the horses.

Learning to listen to what horses have to say is powerful and can sometimes spur the answer to individual change. By including horses in specially designed educational exercises, equine- assisted facilitators have greatly multiplied the participant's rate of success to self-discovery.

There is a rare and magical connection found between horse and human. They have the ability to help us learn and grow. Horses lead people toward taking responsibility and accountability for making the changes within themselves first (thoughts, feelings, emotional regulation, focus, intent, attitude etc), in order to create the desired changes in their immediate surroundings, environment, or when communicating with other people.

These life skills play a pivotal role in assisting young people move their lives forward (self leadership) through challenges and adversity, while promoting healthy relationship building, not only with others, but also an empowered relationship with themselves.

The transformation that is experienced varies between participants. What can be observed consistently is that horses help regulate emotions and big feelings. Horses also validate each individual, allowing the young

people to feel seen and heard and experience the important sense of connection. The benefits are powerful and include strengthening skills in the areas of developing trust; respect; an understanding of others; a deeper connection with their authentic selves; focus and clarity; effective communication; meaningful connections; setting personal boundaries; empowered decision making; and an understanding of how to equip themselves with the skills they need to keep moving forward.

"I continue to be blown away by the inner transformation that takes place when young people come and participate in the programs. It doesn't matter if they come along to a confidence building, anti-bullying or leadership program, the fundamental shifts that occur within their awareness of themselves and others, are profound and longer lasting due to the teachings from the horse. These programs are researched, with irrefutable results in the area of skill development and while EAL is not "therapy", there is an undeniable therapeutic effect that takes place as part of the human/horse interaction. The horses truly are the most amazing teachers."

Equine Assisted Learning helps to empower and equip people to lead the change in their own lives with courage, confidence, positive connections, resilience, assertiveness and focus, providing the medium for them to develop, build and strengthen their skills for life.

Jess Keenan
Owner and Facilitator Leading Change Experiences
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Mental Illness on the rise in schools: how students and teachers can deal with it.

By Eric Bailey

Mental illnesses are on the rise in Australian schools, not only for young students but also for teachers. Because mental illness accounts for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury for youth aged 10-19, according to most recent studies from the World Health Organization, talking about it at school is never too late.

Higher stress levels, anxiety, fear, eating disorders, and other mental illnesses related affect kids and adults. In fact, according to the same study, half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age, but most cases are undetected and untreated. The consequences of not addressing mental health in kids and teens extend to adulthood, affecting their development, their confidence and their future. It affects their physical and psychological wellbeing.

As a Global Youth Motivational Speaker, I have

delivered over 3000 presentations in Australian high schools and around the world. I have witnessed the ugly truth of mental illness and how it affects the lives of students and educators. I believe that while dealing with tough topics, the best approach is to engage in it with a raw, genuine and motivational conversation. People can only live to their full potential when feeling emotionally, socially and mentally healthy.

I believe that when we encourage and talk to young students as honestly as possible, that's when they can relate and build trust to open up about their feelings, fears and emotions.

Mental health continues to hold a stigma around it. The stress of even opening up and recognizing factors that can trigger uncomfortable thoughts is hard to confront. In Australia, approximately 14% of 4 to 17-year-olds experience a mental health problem each year. Feeling anxious, nervous, uncomfortable, unhappy is normal for the most part. We all feel like that. However, when kids can't control these feelings, it escalates to something bigger, and it starts to affect their daily lives.

That is exactly what we see in schools in Australia and all around the globe. Students are feeling isolated, not worthy, unhappy and for different reasons. So many that it is even hard

to understand and recognize. It is important to discern that biological and environmental factors can trigger mental illness in young kids. The most common causes are:

- Trauma (including emotional, sexual, or physical abuse)
- Bullying
- Demands at school
- Substance abuse and alcohol
- Unstable or dysfunctional home environment (including domestic violence or abandonment).
- Unsafe living conditions
- Obesity
- Chronic illness
- Experience traumatic events or acts of violence
- Social Media
- Cultural or social expectations
- Feelings of inadequacy (including low self-esteem, anger, anxiety, loneliness).

And the list can go on and on. These events for the younger students can be life changing. The simple idea of listening to others and getting some advice is not in the teen's vocabulary, which frequently thinks that the world revolves around them. Being aware and observing it is essential to detect some of the early critical signs of disturbances in younger teens.

I was raised on the tough streets of South-Central Los Angeles in the late 70" s. Abandoned

by my biological parents at birth to only realize the doctor's prognosis were a life of pain due to a knee disorder and a host of other ailments. I was bullied and lost all hope of happiness and a bright future. Then I was adopted and given an opportunity to turn my life around. My adopted parents gave me the love and support I needed to stay motivated. But I still suffered from abandonment issues, anger, and anxiety. But back then who really understood what all that meant? There was no open conversation about how to thrive during the pain. SO yes, there were some DARK days.

But I had to ACTIVATE MYSELF!

Despite the drug infested neighbourhood, gang violence, lack of financial resources, racial tension and physical, emotional and mental pain I was fortunate enough to find a vehicle that could help me design a different vision and life for myself. It was called BASKETBALL. My story is that of courage, dedication, focus, determination, and self-belief. From the HOOD TO THE NBL. I played basketball for the Hobart Devils, Melbourne Tigers, Gippsland Lakers, and the Gold Coast Rollers. After 9 knee operations and a hip surgery I knew the time was right for me to transition into something more exciting and of course painless on my body.

I wanted to share my story and strategies of how you can overcome physical and mental challenges to design a championship mindset and environment.

I faced many challenges in my childhood, in college, the NBL, and in the world as a professional speaker. While the conversation was not open at the time, low self-worth combined with repeated failure in education, sports made me feel socially isolated. Despite all those harsh times, I have thrived through mental, emotional, physical and financial challenges.

Transforming The World...One Mind At A Time!!

I had to learn how to NAVIGATE through the FOG!!

To this day, I dedicate myself to bring positive messages, speaking from the heart to students and teachers to build strong and positive wellbeing.

In my experience, when schools open dialogue to talk about risk-taking behaviors, unacceptable behavior in class, low self-confidence and self-worth, negative views of life, bullying and other relevant topics, it is when students start to build a championship mindset, focusing on being the best, no matter where

and when. Maintaining a healthy environment in schools, for students and teachers, with open communication is crucial to develop self-esteem and awareness.

How about the teachers?

Teachers are often seen as heroes, great helpers and the ones who have answers for everything and can solve any problem at school. Well, although teachers can be considered heroes for so many reasons, they are still humans who go through life challenges as much as any of us.

For the teachers and staff, some of the common triggers for work-related stress are:

- Larger class sizes.
- Student behavioral challenges.
- Inadequate resources.
- Poor physical/Mental health and space.
- Increased Workload.
- The gap between preservice training expectations and actual work experiences.

I strongly believe that healthy teachers produce healthy classrooms. The investment in the staff is key to the growth and development of the students. It is imperative for teachers and staff to constantly self-check their emotions and mental wellbeing. And know that it is ok to talk to someone and seek help.

When to seek help?

Many students start to demonstrate early signs that something is not going well often by swinging their mood, constant irritability, and behavior issues. Also, grades start to be affected, not wanting to go to school, or maybe not even wanting to leave the house. Other early signs can be shortness of breath, eating disorders, trying to hurt themselves and presenting signs like feeling sad, not showing up to class, becoming confrontational or getting involved in fights, extreme difficulty concentrating and use of substances.

When showing one or more of these signs, it is time to intervene. Early detection and intervention are huge in order to maintain the students' and the staff's wellbeing. Observe how they react to daily events.

Dealing with it is not fun and will take a load on the school environment to help the student. Investing in developing programs and promoting a healthy environment are the best way to deal with it. Here are some tips and strategies to help students and teachers to deal with mental illness in the school environment.

Tip 1: Educate staff, parents, and students



on symptoms of and help for mental illness.

Educate, promote, talk about it. In order to help someone or seek help for yourself, it is crucial to understand what are the common causes and trigger factors that can affect students and educators at school, how to recognize and discern when it is time to intervene. Know that it is ok not to be ok and it is ok to ask for help. When this message is clear for all, the stigma starts to fade, and confidence starts to grow.

Tip 2: Help ensure a positive, safe school environment.

Promote social and emotional capability and build resilience. Help students understand their feelings, recognize their thoughts, face their fears, and know that they are not alone by facilitating students to connect with others facing the same challenges and relating to other community-based groups in your area. Encourage students to openly express themselves, celebrate the differences. Empower your students with the courage to speak up. Promote and open the school for professionals to bring up different socially challenging topics and to keep the conversation going.

Tip 3: Encourage physical activities and a healthy diet.

Mental illnesses are closely related to physical health. Eating healthy and exercising our bodies helps to reduce stress and anxiety. Also, keep hydrated and drink lots of water. Educate students and encourage the teachers

Continued >

and staff to promote physical activities and to incorporate a healthy balanced diet in their daily routine.

Tip 4: Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making.

Focus on the positive. In order to create a positive environment for students and teachers, praise the positive behavior, encourage students to make good decisions. When we reduce the number of negative responses and promote positive attitudes, it does not take long for students to start to respond better in class, feeling confident and happy again.

Tip 5: Promote school policies that support mental health.

Create memorable events dedicated to promoting open conversations about mental health topics that affect the school environment, such as bullying prevention, anxiety, depression and many others.

Bring in creditable experienced high energy storytelling speakers who the students can relate to and feel comfortable being raw and open!

Feeling angry, anxious and fearful is normal for the most part, for students and teachers. The importance of learning coping skills to deal with it can make a difference between a feeling now or developing a life-changing mental illness. It is important to remember to give the students and teachers a break, not to push it too far when it comes to helping. When professional help is needed, do not hesitate to call for one.

Eric Bailey is one of the world's top Youth Motivational Speakers and currently lives in Brisbane, Queensland Australia. He has spoken to over 4.5 million students in over 13 countries. Through his transparent Activational speaking,

Eric shares his downfall in life and rise to success, confirming that nothing is impossible if you are willing to put in the work and consistently CHECK YOURSELF... FROM THE NECK UP!!!

For more information visit www.ericbaileyglobal.com or watch his video

Never Give Up
https://youtu.be/LKX_SY-LO98



The Nature Based Approach to Wellbeing and Resilience

A proven model that gets students excited!

AS WE all know, mental wellbeing among youth is on a steady decline. Unfortunately, there are not enough organisations that provide solutions for schools and teachers to help their students to develop resilience and wellbeing.

Programs are built on 3 strong pillars: Creating Awareness, Providing Experience and Inspiring participants!

Nature has been proven to be an incredibly powerful vehicle for improving wellbeing and resilience in youth. Hundreds of independent studies across the globe show unequivocal results both in the short term and in the long term, for young people who get to experience nature.

Now, we can't just take busloads of students into the wild say 'good luck' – it'll surely end up like a scene from Lord of Flies! However, considering a few key concepts on wellbeing and resilience, we bring an important structure to the program which has seen fantastic and measurable results for many schools.

Creating Awareness

Of course, educating young people on the importance of spending time in nature is vital. However, we specifically avoid the unengaging, boring lectures that ultimately don't 'stick' with students. Learning and creating awareness about wellbeing and resilience can actually be fun, it can be exciting for students and it certainly builds anticipation for the upcoming program.

Both at the start of the program and pre-program, our leaders teach students about key concepts that effect wellbeing and resilience. Creating this awareness on the first day of the program, serves as an intention setting session for the days or weeks ahead. We focus beyond just school life and study pressures, and include understanding about positive emotion, relationships, life engagement, feeling accomplished and creating meaning in your life. We often see students are really unaware of the 'formula' for creating a resilient and happy life – so we see that creating awareness is a vital first step.

Unfortunately, we find that teachers are commonly put in an awkward spot trying to help students as best they can, but without the proper training or tools. Being part of the journey, teachers not only learn about the formula for a happy and resilient life, but also develop a better understanding that they can refer to after the program.

Creating awareness to our participants is the first pillar in our nature based program!

Providing the Experience

Once students are aware of their own life decisions, we provide them a sample of the practical skills they'll need to create positive wellbeing and resilience in themselves, and in their peers! Our practical experiences include going camping and learning how to setup basic tents and campfires right through advanced orienteering and multiple day off-grid expeditions. We use every part of nature to deliver engaging experiences that deliver a sense of accomplishment, create deeper meaning in a student's life, while delivering positive emotion and building relationship skills.

Often, teachers don't have the time to manage the logistics or qualifications to safely deliver these experiences. We would rather that teachers focus on what they do best, and let us handle what we do best! Our top experiences include:

- Indigenous Australian nights – where we work with local Aboriginal guides that teach students how to cook Kangaroo Tail, and the meaning behind the activities
- Kangaroo Island 3-5 day camping programs (in our purpose built venue), which include sandboarding and visiting some incredible natural sights
- Adventure activities such as surfing, kayaking, rock climbing and much more!
- The simple stuff such as enjoy a relaxing cooking session on the campfire, under the stars of Milky Way

All these activities are specifically tailored for our wellbeing program, and once students have



the awareness – they can make the link between theory and practise during these incredible experiences. Student's love the experiences, because we make it our mission to inspire students to fall in love with nature.

Inspiring Students

In the long term, the nature based approach to wellbeing and resilience works when you not only create awareness and provide an experience, but when students are inspired and walk away having had an absolute blast! In order to create an inspiring program, there are some fundamental things we put extra effort into:

- Catering – it's all part of the experience, having healthy meals that students love is vital. Good quality meals and having enough for thirds is something we pride ourselves on!
- The Itinerary – when we create itineraries, we work to make sure that the sights we see are jaw dropping and the activities we do are a tonne of fun!
- Creating Memories – laughter, adventure, challenge, silly photos and that one really weird story! Our program leaders are entertainers that love to create memories.

We often hear back from schools with feedback that students are asking their parents to go camping, or sometimes even to make campfires 'out the back' (of their apartment). It's what we aim for, and our mission to inspire students so that they can make their own positive decisions after the program, that benefit their wellbeing and resilience, and that of their peers.

Nature is accessible to everyone,. Nature is affordable and in many cases free, and any age groups can enjoy nature – yet the benefits are bountiful.

Aaron Danicek / Students Explore Australia
www.StudentsExploreAustralia.com.au

A Tribute to Teachers



Teaching would have to be one of the most stimulating, rewarding, and honourable professions - contributing to the development of young people, influencing their knowledge, opening their minds, and impacting their growth.

I can not think of another profession with so much reward. So, if teaching is such a gift and an honour, why do we not have a waiting list a mile long of people wanting to join this incredible profession? Why is the attrition rate so low? Why are teachers not the happiest most fulfilled people in the world? More importantly, What can we do about this?

The education world has been my life – from the age of 5 when I entered the school gates for the first time, the transition to high school, then university and by 20 standing before my own class as a teacher. With my 50th birthday next week, I take this time to reflect on 45 years in education, 30 as an educator and I want to honour, congratulate, and thank all teachers.

TEACHERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

The quality of the teacher is the most influential factor, that we can control, in improving student outcomes.

“Teachers account for about 30% of the variance. It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in this learning equation.” (Teachers Make a Difference. What is the research evidence? Hattie, 2003)

This paper first highlighted the worth of teachers and the incredible impact they have. It proved that investing in teachers was clearly the best way to go and yet it also adds pressure and expectation on teachers to ‘fix everything’.

Over the past 30 years I have seen a considerable decline in the level of respect shown to teachers from others – parents, students, the general public and the media. Saying you are a teacher was said with such pride as you were seen as a pivotal member of society, working tirelessly to support young people develop. You were proud, your parents were proud and the majority of people you encountered were genuinely grateful for all you did. There was never any other profession that I even

considered...I love educating. Teaching does not appear to have this same level of regard anymore.

Teachers Retention

Today, through Powerful Partnerships, I speak with hundreds of teachers, many of whom feel underappreciated, undervalued, and not respected. They are challenged by students and parents alike and the workload seems to continue to climb. It took the recent pandemic to highlight the worth of teachers, with many parents realising just what it takes to educate and care for young people all day, every day. The media finally acknowledged the dedication and commitment shown by the teaching fraternity.....what a refreshing feeling that was.

In the absence of a national database on teacher attrition rates in Australia, estimates vary that between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. There are a range of factors in play here but clearly our teachers are not being appreciated, respected and supported enough in this highly demanding, yet highly rewarding profession.

How do we lift the status of teachers in our country? How do we attract quality people to the profession? How do we support teachers throughout their career to continue to grow and thrive? How do we show care for them, so they do not burn out?

There’s no quick fix....but let us explore some of the issues and potential solutions.

WORKLOAD

Australian public school teachers face higher workloads, fewer resources, and more administration duties than global averages, according to a new international report into teaching conditions.

The OECD’s Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 report focuses on teachers’ work in the classroom, demographics, classroom challenges, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and training and provision of professional development. It found that Australian teachers are some of the most innovative and enthusiastic adopters of new ideas and approaches to education but also among the most overworked.

Teachers will tell you of their ongoing struggle with a crowded curriculum,

poor behaviour and far too much paperwork detracting from valuable, quality teaching and learning time.

ATTITUDE

Teachers report that behaviour and attitude challenges in classrooms has increased. Many parents are more defensive of their children and less supportive of teacher’s decisions to discipline when required. Teachers need greater support from families. After all, we are all trying to provide the best for young people, so we are actually on the same page.

ASSESSMENT

The introduction and public analysis of standardised testing adds another layer of pressure and scrutiny on teachers. Whilst the collection of such data can be very useful for teachers in identifying learning gaps, it’s the public ‘sensationalised headlines’ that adds to the decline in respect teachers feel.

LEARNING PROGRAMS

There has been a significant increase in the number of programs schools are asked to implement or have providers implement, all of which are incredibly valuable – cyber safety, consent, protective education, stranger danger, sun-safety, nutrition....the list goes on. Schools are a convenient place to implement these programs, but they do take time away from the teaching of core subjects, those which teachers are often publicly judged on.

These are just some of the factors impacting teachers in our current climate, contributing to their frustration, fatigue, and burnout. So, let us go back to the key questions which should be driving us to explore solutions and enact changes on the teaching profession.

SOLUTIONS

How do we lift the status of teachers in our country? How do we attract quality people to the profession? How do we support teachers throughout their career to continue to grow and thrive? How do we show care for them, so they do not burn out?

Teachers need a variety of pathways to support them in staying fresh, energised, and valued. We need to retain experienced teachers in our system and utilise their expertise and experience to help and support each other and particularly to support the next generation of teachers as they enter our profession. Coaching and Mentoring Programs are a key to this but currently many schools who see the value in this and are embedding these practices, have them as an ‘added extra’. Teachers

are not always able to experience the true benefits of coaching as no additional time is allocated. Money needs to be allocated to help create these roles, so teachers have less time face to face with students and more time engaged in professional dialogue with each other, giving and receiving feedback, watching each other teach, planning for the unique needs of all students and being equipped to thrive in the profession.

MENTORING

Teachers new to the profession need additional support. A reduction in their teaching loads, more time observing experienced teachers who have spent years honing their craft, more time to reflect on their practice and more time to discuss their growth with mentors. Mentoring is far more than showing new educators how to work the photocopier! Mentors need time to invest in their mentees. Currently many teachers are trying to support others but already have a full load. If we don’t start investing in teachers to be effective mentors and give them time to do so, not only are we letting down our new teachers, but we are also contributing to the burn out of our experienced teachers.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Australia is one of the highest countries in the world in terms of face-to-face time with students (contact time). Primary schools have on average about 2.5 hours a week where they are not in front of a class and secondary teachers on average about 3.5 hours. How do we possibly expect our teachers to plan, reflect, assess, learn, grow, report etc in just that amount of time? This is why teachers invariably spend their weekends and evenings working – that doesn’t help them learn from each other though – and once again drives us to work in isolation. Teachers need time with colleagues so a truly collaborative culture is harnessed.

Einstein famously said, “The purest form of insanity is to leave everything the same and at the same time hope that things will change.” Teachers need opportunities to regularly involve themselves in professional learning – to understand the changing world that our young ones are growing up in, to hear about the research into effective teaching and to be abreast with the latest developments and programs available. Building capacity in our teachers, investing in their growth and development, reducing their face-to-face time and providing them with opportunities to learn would be a great start.

RESPECT

Lifting the status of educators in Australia is certainly needed. In countries like Finland who regularly make the news by reporting high results in universal measures have the highest university entrance levels – higher than a doctor. Parents say, “My son is becoming a teacher.” with such pride. Their teaching degrees are Masters Level only and they all include a major area of study in Psychology. The society value teachers above many other professions – this respect filters down to the children. We require a culture shift – raise the bar on teaching – make the entrance requirements more rigorous to attract the right people to the profession - increase their salaries - increase the incentives to educate...Make teaching a desirable vocation, one which is respected, honoured, and supported.

Change can start with us. Let us all....Value our teachers....Respect our teachers....Thank our teachers....Support our teachers.

Jodie Davey / Powerful Partnerships
www.powerfulpartnerships.com.au

PRAXIUM ACADEMY:**What it is that I'm trying to accomplish**

Today people in general do have a lot of emotional trauma. This can have a large effect on both family and friends, including themselves; whether that effect is out in the open for all to see or is internalised. It can come out in different forms, such as; drug abuse, stress related illness, mental health or can be the cause of outbursts of anger or physical violence. No matter which way it surfaces, it can be very easy to deal with. As a community, people everywhere can look inside themselves and will see that they have the capacity to change their own lives!

This project is very simple to explain; I believe that no matter how large the problem seems to be to the client, it can always be resolved. By discussing their issues with the client, they will find within themselves the strength and the ability to understand the reasons for these issues. To understand a problem is to first shed your fear of the issue and bring it in to the light;

with this light, the answers to these problems can become very clear to the client. Once this is completed, the problem stops having control over your life. Thereby freeing the person from all forms of self-inflicted abuse; that in turn allows the body and the mind to heal. When this happens, your outlook of the world will change.

Once the client has dealt with these issues, it can have a positive effect not only on themselves, but the community as a whole. By encouraging people to be more aware of the skills and tools that they already possess and by using them, together we can create a strong foundation for clearer communication between each other. Misunderstandings will lessen and no one will have to use physical or emotional abuse to get their point across.

Thereby, bringing back to our community a sense of belonging and understanding in everyday life. Through meditation and sword-play, you are presented with a practical approach to the what life may give you. It may never give it to you the way you may expect and you will be encouraged to deal with it in your own individual way. Meditation will help you approach it with a clear and focused mindset.

Time to Let Go

I invite you to make the time to understand your hurt and pain; the hurt and pain from your past relationships; the hurt and pain that you believe that mother and father may have caused you; and the hurt and pain you yourself caused. This is the first step that will help you will make the much-needed room within yourself to allow joy and happiness to be felt again in your life.

As stated by Morpheus to Neo in the Matrix "You take the blue pill, the story ends. You wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes."

I am not offering you pills but the choice in which way you want your life to go. To find out more please contact me to make an appointment.

Samuel Zsombok / The Praxium Academy
www.thepraxiumacademy.com.au



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Raising Resilient Young People

How great would it be to ‘fail-proof’ our children and teenagers?!

Things like conflict, stress and failure are the kind of challenges that generally have all of these negative connotations. Often, in our own lives these are the kind of painful and uncomfortable challenges that we dread and go to great lengths to avoid.

Sometimes out of care for our children, we can inadvertently communicate that fear of challenges to them as we try to protect them from the pain we have known all too well. When the rubber hits the road though, we know that some of our biggest failures, conflicts and stresses have been the making of us.

When we talk about ‘fail-proofing’ our young people, we’re not suggesting that anyone should be capable of raising a young person that never fails, has conflict or gets overwhelmed by stress. We’re talking about raising children and teenagers who see failures as a speed bump rather than a roadblock, who rise to, not run from a challenge.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS

1. Redefine challenges

Rather than failure being something that you give your students lots of sympathy for or show disappointment in, when we frame our response as encouragement for their effort and excitement for what they can learn, then it doesn’t have to be a sad occasion that we buffer and protect them from.

Instead of telling them to avoid something that brings stress or makes them nervous, we need to teach them that sometimes a bit of stress and pressure is good for us and is what pushes us to grow! When we teach them the difference between eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress), we empower them. As we say in our workshop on stress, “Stress is like fire in the kitchen, it’s great for cooking things, but becomes dangerous when ignored and allowed to grow out of control.”

While we want to give weight to what our students care about and never want to be dismissive of their challenges, we also want to be deliberate about reframing the experience of challenges into opportunities for growth.

When our students experience challenges, let’s ask questions like ‘what did you learn for next time?’ Questions like this celebrate what can be gained from the experience and subtly infer that there will be a next time so that it is assumed they will try again!

2. Catch their language

Something we repeat over and over in our school programs is that “failure is only something that happens, never something we are,” because there is significance in the way that we talk about ourselves.

As our students respond to an event of failure, we have to watch the language they use around it and help them separate the event from their identity. When we catch them referring to themselves as a failure or as stupid/dumb/terrible at sport etc. that’s your chance to catch their language and separate the event from their identity.

“You’re not stupid, you just learnt what you can work on for next time! I’m so proud of how hard you’re trying.”

3. Hold a mirror up to yourself

We all know that our actions speak much louder than the words we teach. If we want our young people to see challenges as helpful, we have to watch how we respond to them in our own lives, because they are always watching.

Do we get defensive when they offer feedback? What about when our colleague or a parent makes a suggestion on how we can do something differently?

Do we talk about conflict as a win-lose scenario or do we model humility and compromise?

Do we complain about extra responsibilities and the stress, or model healthy prioritising?

As leaders, teachers and parents, our priority is always to create a safe and supportive environment for our young people to flourish in. We want them to know they can come to us with anything. However we never want that to be at the expense of encouraging resilience and a posture of growth. This is the very reason we run workshops and training devoted to empowering young people with healthy coping mechanisms for the challenges they will face. With your support and encouragement, those challenges will be the making of a strong, resilient and compassionate generation who achieve their full potential.

For therecord - you’re doing a great job too!

Cassie Kirtisingham / Founder of IZRA
www.izra.com.au



What it takes to get a job in the sports industry and the available pathways

Have you ever wondered what it takes to get a job within the sports industry? Or what pathways are available?

Richmond Institute is the education arm of the Richmond Football Club and a leader in sports industry education, aiming to create the next generation of sports leaders.

Through Richmond Football Club's partnership with Swinburne University of Technology and our connection with industry organisations, we provide nationally recognised qualifications that include outstanding experiences, outcomes, and pathways for students.

All students are inspired to thrive and unleash their full potential throughout their time in the courses. Following the Richmond Football Club's overall purpose, everyone is encouraged to connect to thrive and win.

With campuses in Melbourne, Albury/Wodonga and Mildura, students learn from industry leaders in a supportive, world-class environment. They learn skills and knowledge that will assist them to be successful both personally and professionally.

“What I loved the most about my experience was how engaging the course was and how enthusiastic the staff were to help us gain our Diploma’s. I now feel confident working in a fast-paced environment that is the sporting industry and I have made friendships that will last a lifetime.

Ally | 2019 Graduate

Diploma of Sport (Sport Development) / Diploma of Leadership and Management

Students are guided throughout their journey with us so that they are confident in their next step, whether that be further education, employment of a combination of the two.

We focus heavily on personal development throughout all courses on offer. This allows students to better understand themselves whilst improve their mental fitness, resilience, and connection to others.

“Richmond Institute taught me a substantial amount around the importance of self-development and in which direction I wanted to head career wise. The aspect in which the course content was delivered was unrivalled in my studies so far with it being engaging and catering to all of mine and my peers needs”

Continued >

John | 2019 Graduate

Diploma of Sport (Sport Development) / Diploma of Leadership and Management

Everyone is able to build positive relationships with staff, each other and industry experts through networking opportunities. Students are also provided with real employment and placement opportunities with Richmond Football Club, Aligned Leisure and our extensive Sports Industry Network.

“The professional growth I gained from my placements were huge and had a massive impact on how I approached jobs going forward after Richmond Institute”

Mia | 2018 Graduate

Diploma of Sport (Sport Development) / Diploma of Leadership and Management

With a strong emphasis on practical learning, the highly skilled and experienced teaching team use a variety of teaching styles and methods to engage everyone. Learning is hands-on, practical and related to real-world and industry contexts.

“This program is designed to make your potential be reached. This program is designed to make you feel connected. To appreciate you, for who you are. The teachers are people involved in this program and are willing to go beyond just coursework, these people want to know you as an individual and they want to help you as much as they can”

Nathalia | 2020 Graduate

Diploma of Sport (Sport Development) / Diploma of Leadership and Management

Students also have the opportunity to attend national and international trips. Previous trips have included experiences to the Northern Territory, India, China, and Indonesia.

“The best thing I experiences with the Richmond Institute was being able to go up to the Northern Territory and learn about the Indigenous culture as well as teaching football in the communities. I also got to travel to India and work with Primitive Sports where I got to explore the sport science side of the program which I really enjoyed”

Tahlia | 2019 Graduate

Diploma of Sport (Sport Development) / Diploma of Leadership and Management

As well as post-school courses, School-Based Traineeships are also on offer with a focus on health and leisure. This unique program combines a senior secondary program (VCE or VCAL) with part-time employment and studies of a nationally recognised qualification. Students participate in scheduled training and employment each week and are provided with the experience and knowledge required for future success in the industry.

Richmond Institute has over 40 staff members who all have experiences within education, elite sporting environments and personal development spaces. They are a team of highly experienced staff who offer students a valuable experience.

Two staff members at Richmond Institute haven’t taken the typical pathway into University, but instead studied Diploma’s to get into the position that they are now.

Education Manager (Health and Performance) at Richmond Institute, Michael Chiovitti, highlights that he took an alternative pathway to get the job that he wanted within the industry.

“In Year 12, I had a focus on becoming a professional athlete but ended up sustaining a nasty injury,” he said.

“I didn’t receive the ATAR that I needed, so I completed a TAFE course (Diploma of Sport) to get me into a University course eventually.”

This proved to be a roadblock for Michael as he was not sure what he wanted to do outside of playing sport.

However, after completing a holistic sports program, these qualifications led Michael into a range of different roles within elite sporting clubs.

“My favourite position was being a part of Richmond’s VFL program in 2010 and helping the team make the finals as their High-Performance Manager,” he explained.

Michael has gone on to work with several athletes involved in Boxing, Ski Cross, MPL Victoria, and WNBL.

“A course like a Diploma of Sport gives you a snapshot of all the different pathways that sit within the industry and helps you to identify what you don’t want to do, as well as what you do.”

After undertaking a Diploma of Sport (Sport Development)/Diploma of Leadership and Management (SIS50319/BSB51918) in 2018, past student Shayla Clarke reflected on her journey into her current position.

“I undertook many placements within my year of study of the dual Diploma,” she explained.

“Roles such as assisting the Fan Engagement team at Richmond Football Club, completing administration tasks at Phoenix Management, and being the Customer Experience Officer at Aligned Leisure all helped me to get where I am today.

“I was able to identify the areas within sport that sparked my interest and they helped me to decide on the right pathway for me.”

After completing her qualifications and leaving the course with a range of different experiences, Shayla is now the Audience Growth & Engagement Officer at Richmond Football Club.

Shayla plays an integral role in the delivery of fan engagement activities across AFL and AFLW game days.

These stories highlight that there are alternative ways to progress into roles in elite sporting environments outside of your typical University degree.

For more information on Richmond Institute, head to our website www.richmondinstitute.com.au

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Role models let girls see who they can be.



GIRLS growing up in the 21st century face a unique set of challenges. In theory, they can do anything they wish and have the same opportunities for a successful career as their male peers. Yet in practice, they are often confused about their options and lacking in self-belief. They may feel pressured to start making career choices early, but their aspirations tend to be limited by their gender and amplified by anxiety about the future.

There’s a growing body of research from around the world that shows that young girls worry about a myriad of issues – from choosing the right subjects in Year 10, to being liked on social media and speaking up for their beliefs. The latest Confidence Code for Girls report, shows how much the confidence of girls drops during the teenage years, stating that ‘Between the ages of 8 and 14, girls’ confidence levels drop by 30%.’

It seems that the new pressures and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic and global climate change are making girls more anxious than ever. In homes and schools around the country, an increasing number of parents and teachers are reporting seeing their daughters lose confidence in their own abilities. This can lead to frustration as they are unsure how to help them step into their own power.

There is no doubt that we live in a culture where strong women are often absent from the public eye and there’s clearly still a way to go before gender equality is achieved in Australia. The UN’s Sustainable Development Goal #5 is for gender equality by 2030, yet according to the World Economic Forum, we are unlikely to reach

equality for another 99.5 years.

All too often young girls are following negative role models, or role models who display unattainable images of perfection. This type of negative comparison is detrimental to girls’ self-esteem and mental wellbeing.

A lack of strong and visible female role models affects girls’ beliefs about women’s ability to rise to positions of power. To compound the problem, girls tend to underestimate their abilities more than boys. When they do begin a career, they may wait to make their move until they believe they are experienced enough, even though they are already well-prepared and adequately skilled.

The good news is that research also shows that authentic stories from courageous female role models helps defy stereotypes and inspire young girls to turn limitations into possibilities.

To show girls who they can be and what they can achieve, many female empowerment platforms are making their women visible by sharing the personal stories of strong, successful women. Industries that have been traditionally gender-imbalanced such as like construction, engineering and trades are also sharing career journey narratives of women who are defying stereotypes and thriving etc.

Narratives like these provide a sense of hope and connection, helping them to lift their aspirations and fulfil their unique potential.

There are multiple benefits and positive outcomes to be gained from this approach. When accomplished and confident women

share their stories, they can go a long way towards breaking down barriers and reducing unconscious bias.

Research shows that giving girls access to powerful role models has three core benefits. Role models represent and expand what is possible. They inspire women to be more ambitious and aim higher. And they demonstrate the mindsets and behaviours of how to rise.

Showcasing women who take risks and start businesses or take on roles even though they don’t feel fully prepared, gives girls’ confidence to reconsider their potential and recognise their own individual strengths. It’s helpful for girls to realise that where you start in your career - the choice you make in year 10 about high school subjects – doesn’t necessarily define the rest of your life.

Access to different role models demonstrates non-linear career paths and teaches girls essential life skills and behavioural traits such as leadership, courage and self-belief. The emphasis is on lateral thinking and skill-building, rather than simply climbing the career ladder or acquiring a single degree that is relevant to only one career. www.empowergirl.com.au Georgie Ondaatje

Georgie Ondaatje
Anna May

www.empowergirl.com.au

The power to change lives through Self Defence



EMPOWER THE BODY EMPOWER THE MIND.

SELF-DEFENCE is an amazing tool to teach young people how to do life. With the fast pace and the information overload our kids are being bombarded telling them what to do, how to do it, what they want, and how to succeed that they are swimming in a world of information but are void of the wisdom to know what to do with it. They are becoming increasingly lost and do not know who they are. How often are they told that they need to be, get this score, win this match, have this career that they do not know what to choose. How do they navigate through the sea of information to figure it out? We can find the answer in the power of nature and the natural way we move the body. There are answers all around us but the answers lie within us all.

POWER

Self-defence is one of the most powerful tools in learning ethic, values, empowerment, and conflict resolution. It has many forms of what it has the power to do. It links the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual side of us. When we align with who we are and what 'floats our boat' then we have the ability to find and

live by the values that bring us fulfillment.

PATTERNING

Everything we do is a pattern. We have a pattern to brush our teeth, to buy close, to have a shower, to eat our meals, to drive a car. We have patterns of anger, happiness, passion, belief. Everything is a pattern and we learn how we run it. It has a story and meaning part, a physical and action side and an emotional and feeling based side to it. If we understand the sequence, we can understand the process. We understand how our brain works and functions. Every behaviour has a driver. Through self-defence and empowerment, we have the ability to discover why we do a behaviour and the sequence of it and how we instigate it and run it.

ART OF COMMUNICATION

Self-defence is a powerful tool of communication. Our whole belief system is communicated through our physical body. The way we move, how we distribute our weight, how we breath, the speed of our blood flow, the way we lean, the tension we hold in our muscles, the hormones that are released, where we look, how we look, the way we focus and so much more. When we understand how to read all this communication then we have a

great ability to know what someone may decide to do. When you learn this skill, you have an amazing awareness to read the play, by listening to the communication that is not spoken.

Often what we speak is not the truth of our story. We use the spoken word to cover our fear and to try and make ourselves look confident but underneath we feel the complete opposite. When we have this ability to read the communication, we can pick up the cues of whether someone is trustworthy or a threat to us. We can tell if they are lying, we can predict what their next behaviour may be, and we can start to read their mind. In the education of WISE Self Defence all these skills are taught. When you have this ability, you start to see the red flags of people's behaviour and know when to implement safety strategies in the different choices of mental, verbal, physical and emotional actions. This is a powerful tool to get to know others and to recognise if they are trustworthy in this moment. It also has the ability to build answers to what is not being said and build rapid rapport very quickly. This is a defusion strategy as well.

POWERFUL PRESENCE.

Confidence and resilience are a powerful process and it is only learnt when we have the

ability to face our fears and find our courage. When we are confident in the 4 structures of our character then we can stand with power to be who we want to be and to live by our values and ethics. It is only when we own ourselves will we live intentionally. It has a secondary gain of people not seeing as a target. We will not be swayed in the wind about what we want to achieve. Also, it has the ability, if done in an empowerment process to be able to defuse and influence behaviours that can keep us safe. When you are no longer a threat or a target, even to an instigator of violence, then dominant behaviour can disappear.

Every action in a human being is an act of love or a cry for help. Violence is also a cry for help. But when we are faced with someone that is attacking us then we will move to 4 responses. Fight, flight, freeze or submit. We will often approach this with an animalistic response. This is where there is no cognitive thinking, we are down to sheer survival. When we are in this mode, we are not going to value human life, we are only thinking about survival. This is where we will do anything to survive a situation. This is also where someone may go over the top to deal with a situation. As students are learning to navigate life this is where you will often see in the school yard extreme behaviours and when it is subdued the student has no idea why they do what they do because they are acting out a survival strategy.

When you learn self-defence, there is a great ability for students to know that they have multiple choices on how to deal with the situation, thus lessening the fight or flight response and therefore have much more control of their emotions and their actions. This is where teaching students to understand what drives human behaviour is fundamental, and allows the school to build coping skills and respectful ways of how to handle conflict. We are now looking at designing our life then hoping that everything will be ok, with no reference points because we expect people to know it rather than teach them to know it. Education is the critical key in giving students the building blocks of how to navigate life.

As the owner of WISE Self-Defence, I have witnessed a marked change in behaviour in people who start to implement the education where they have completely changed their life through the teaching and implementing of these strategies

OUR FEARS

Our biggest fear in life is the powerless moments where we may feel that we are not enough and



feel immense shame about who we are. We often feel that we will be judged, compared, belittled, ashamed of who we are, so we look to hide ourselves so that we can conform, be a part of, be respected and loved but fundamentally that we belong. People fear rejection more than they value their life. Why does someone hop into a car with a drunk driver, smoke cigarettes, stay in an abusive relationship, torment, and belittle someone else and even have or implement suicidal ideology? All these choices are to avoid rejection, not being loved or not belonging.

Once we have this focus, we lose who we are and become the puppet in someone else's game where they get to control who and how we are. This is where you will become a victim in your own life. In Australia in 2018 we had up to 65K people attempt suicide and 1 in 8 were successful. Self-defence instructor often teach when you have an aggressor and how do you handle physically a situation of threat. As a Self Defence instructor with many years working in this field with people who have taken this road, I fully know that often the biggest threat to our wellbeing is ourselves, what we believe, and the action we take to move away from our fears. Therefore, WISE Self Defence is so important.

We look at how we build our own self-esteem, resilience, and a wise understanding of human life and beliefs that drives every human behaviour. It is essential that we educate in mental wellbeing as part of a self defence program. There are fundamental tools that are part of this program that has tangible exercises on how to build our sense of self-worth, and how to take ownership over it so that we are in control of who we are not someone else's very

ignorant view of us. With this multiple tooled approach there is an amazing ability to teach students of all ages how to build their own character and be proud of who they are.

It is about how do we view ourselves, and how do we fit into this current world where we are constantly told to compare ourselves. We are all born with a fingerprint and an iris that is completely different than anyone else and makes us completely individual. We are born to be different and through our education we inspire the belief of how we create the story of who we are and be proud of what makes us tick, while we discover the world and what we are designed to do for it.

PHYSICAL DEFENCE.

One of the most powerful tools in self-defence is to know how to handle yourself physically when we are faced with a physical threat. How to stop someone from not regarding our no's and how to stand strong behind our no's. When we have the ability to stand strong then it can give all our words, beliefs, and actions so much more strength. We know how to look after ourselves, we also know how to not just survive an adverse event but to be powerful within it.

There have been so many people that have lost their lives and if they only knew a few fundamental skills in physical defence then they may have gotten out of a situation. Being an empowerment coach to victims of crime and working with them through what happened to

Continued >



them, one of the comments that I have been given so many times is 'I wish I had known all of this stuff that you are teaching before what happened to me.' After they have worked with me, they feel so much more empowered because they know when they have been targeted, know what to do before, during and after a situation, and know all the skills to get out of multiple scenarios. To protect your body, your mind, your spirit, and your emotions is a powerful place to be.

When we believe in ourselves and trust our abilities, our instincts and to have faith in them changes everything. Fear starts to dissipate and we can now live in love and trust in our lives. We no longer fear being victimised, abused, dominated but know that we can be successful in the middle of adversity and dominance which makes all the difference. This is how we build resilience and confidence. It is not just saying I can but believing that I actually can is the most empowering gift in our life.

SELF-SABOTAGE

I have also watched so many students let go of every opportunity in their life because they are just wanting to survive. When they are in survival mode, education is not important. Taking a breath is all they can think about. I have watch so many young people give up their hopes and their dreams because all their energy is being used to navigate and survive their fears. Education is the last thing on their mind. This has a spiral effect that can short circuit their life for the rest of their life. If they create patterns

while in this mode and they are wired with a lot of emotion then this pattern can stay with them all their life. This is where you will often see people self-sabotage themselves.

EDUCATION IS THE MEANING OF LIFE

We do everything to build the knowledge in our children to give them the best opportunities in life to be successful, but the one thing that we are not addressing is to teach them how to handle the adversities and challenges in life that are bestowed upon them through the actions of other humans that do not feel powerful so look at getting their power back by disempowering someone else. When we learn self-defence, we have an amazing opportunity to give them the best education of their life and give them the tools of how to handle adversity so that they know with absolute certainty that they have everything within themselves to handle and journey the gifts and the adversities of life and find their power and their strength and have the confidence to use it.

Contact information

For more information and to discuss a program you can contact Fiona Skene's WISE Self Defence, Empowerment and Life Strategy Programs.

www.wiseselfdefence.com.au or email Fiona on fiona@wiseselfdefence.com.au.



Conservation Importance- Be Educated!

Australia is home to a remarkably diverse ecosystem, with a wide range of plants and animals that thrive, normally. With the human invasion happening all over the world the beautiful spaces are disappearing fast. Conservation is a way to save these endangered areas and animals. Conservation efforts in Australia have hit the proverbial brick wall... humans. Reptile Encounters is here to help understand why conservation is important.

Humans have a way of over-consuming products and not caring where the waste goes. Millions of gallons of rubbish are found in the oceans each year. This endangers not only the health of the water itself but the delicate ecosystems it disturbs, besides being dangerous for the animals. So where is the disconnect between humans to ecosystems?

It is increasingly obvious that most people are not outdoorsmen. Some will never see a forest, swim in a lake, or see a glacier collapse- unless they watch it on the internet. Because of the convenience of home, fewer people are forced to travel to meet friends or see places they have never seen. With the current pandemic, travel is little to none. Why save something that you cannot physically see or that you can just look up? The answer is simple- the earth is our only home.

Australia's conservation focuses on biodiversity, especially rainforests. These forests are home to animals that can only be found in Australia. The Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, for example, is a critically endangered bird that makes nests in the tropical rainforests and Acacia woodlands. Deforestation is reducing their habitat which in turn reduces their security to reproduce. The trees they call their home are centuries old, so planting new trees will not help them for

centuries. Pseudo-nesting boxes are placed where the birds can use them, but there are not enough to protect the future of the birds.

There are those who say conservation is not the answer to the problems, like the Saltwater Crocodile. Images of crocodile attacks will fill your browser if you search for them. Those who oppose conservation cite the nature of nature itself- that extinction is a natural process species go through. There have been at least five mass extinctions in the past, the last being dinosaurs, which have in turn given space to new species and rebuilt other species populations. So, why should we stop it?

Extinction rates have increased because of human multiplication and over-consumption. Bigger and better places to live mean more natural resources mined for the benefit of humans. Those natural resources are not easily replaced and in some cases are finite. Resources also provide homes, food, and security to many varieties of animals. In the 1990s biologists created a bigger picture outlook by showing the world exactly how plants and animals interact and how it could benefit humans. This opened many eyes and wallets, paving the way for more conservation plans.

At Reptile Encounters, our mission is to teach the next generation how and why to conserve nature. We use our voices for those who don't have one, aiming to set the standard for environmental education. Through close-up wildlife experiences, we create lasting memories and inspire students to take an interest in the natural world around them. Passing on a knowledge and passion about wildlife is key in inspiring a generation of "better humans" — people who understand, respect, and conserve natural habitats. All life, human, animal, and plant, should be valued. We strive to combine personal wildlife adventures and education to teach the next generation how to be kind to the planet.

Our Programs with a Purpose projects help with conservation by implementing goal actions. We support programs like B1G1 which helps

with conservation around the world. They assisted us with our goal of planting a tree for every incursion we had in 2019. Those trees are now growing in the World Heritage Daintree Rainforest. As one of the hubs of Australian wildlife, conserving this rainforest is essential to maintaining our nation's biodiversity. Our actions are also aiding in carrying out the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, these goals focus on how to continue developing our communities without harming the nature around us.

Help us conserve the Australian Wildlife like the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, Growling Grass Frog, Yellow Spotted Monitor, and the Saltwater Crocodile and many other endangered species. Extinction rates can decrease if more humans take pride in the exquisite biodiversity outside their doorstep.

Please contact us today if you're interested in joining the fight for conservation. Whether you want to join our team of Wildlife Ambassadors or host an event at your school or business. See how you can help us impact Australia!

Image top left: Australia's natural habitats are in danger. Through education, people can understand our role in the ecological decline and how conservation can help.

Image top right: Australia is home to a remarkable ecosystem, but it is slowly being destroyed like other parts of the world. Reptile Encounters is here to help you understand the importance of conservation.



Josh Cox - Owner/Director of Reptile Encounters
Fay Gregory
Josh Cox
www.reptileencounters.com.au

THE WELLBEING EFFECT

The Wellbeing Affect

Inspiring schools, one person at a time to significantly impact student wellbeing.

Schools today are called upon to play such a pivotal role in the lives of students and they do this beyond the classroom. Young people are incredibly fortunate to have this community of people in their lives who can be an outlet and a source of support to help when they really need it. This is especially true for adolescents experiencing mental health challenges.

What we know is that more than 75% of mental health issues emerge before the age of 25 and that suicide is the leading cause of death amongst our young people. These statistics reinforce the urgent need for early intervention and support for our students and training for school staff to be able to support them. Our job is not to become counsellors, or to diagnose mental health issues with students. Rather, we work collectively to ensure that students in all schools feel safe, connected and confident to talk to a trusted adult who will guide them towards hope and wellness. We hold a strong belief that all adults who either work or live with a young person, have a responsibility and accountability to be able to confidently step forward to support the mental health challenges that young people face.

After working in this space for nearly 20 years, we know how vital it is for all staff to be equipped with confidence in their abilities to have these necessary and sometimes instrumental conversations with students, when they are concerned or worried about them. A person's title or role within a school does not define their relationship with a student. Students disclose mental health and emotional challenges or stress to various staff members from maths teachers to library staff, to school administration staff - the people that they have a connection with. We imagine a world where all school staff have not only the skills but the confidence to step forward and have a conversation with a young person, with the knowledge on the best way to help that student access the support they need.

Studying Social Work at Sydney University was a life changing experience for me, when I was given the opportunity to work with young people. It opened my eyes to the importance of community education, awareness and early intervention in working with young people and more serendipitously, confirmed my passion for supporting and engaging with young people. I continued to work in the youth industry for the next 20 years and have practiced a range of different modalities of youth work such as psycho-education, outreach, mentoring, counselling, education and strategic planning - all areas that have their own strengths and bring a depth of support to young people across Australia.

I was fortunate enough to work in the 'front line' as well as at executive and leadership levels and it was in these dual roles that I recognised not only the importance of early intervention work, but the critical nature of it. There was a notion, belief and passion that stemmed from this work, acknowledging that we can support our young people using an early intervention framework creating a positive impact in their life and trajectory. With this in mind, The Wellbeing Affect was born.

Our Passion

In Australia, our youth mental health statistics are staggering, and they drive our team to deliver exceptional training outcomes to schools, parents, communities and the corporate sector. Mental Illness does not discriminate, and we are passionate about delivering programs that impart our knowledge, skills, empathy and understanding of mental health in young people. Our driving force to support everyone within a school community, stems from the urgent need for early intervention, skills in crisis management, and the ongoing necessary support for young people in schools Australia wide.

Providing schools with a holistic wellbeing framework

We hope that mental health and wellbeing takes a prominent role in your school and the lives of both students and teachers. As such, we recommend:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid training for all staff
- Wellbeing support/supervision
- Parent sessions / training
- Peer support

We know that collective action in this space with staff, parents, young people and the community will see increased positive outcomes for all. Additionally, we recognise the importance of school communities being able to demonstrate mental wellbeing credentials through the MHFA training Initiative, that supports this first step forward. The next step is yours to take.

I'd like to finish with a story which has stayed with me over the years and exemplifies why I feel so passionately about my work.

10 years ago, I walked into a school to deliver a Safe Partying workshop and I met a young boy named Jack. Jack sat at the back of the room, constantly disrupting the class and disrupting the workshop at every opportunity. We have all had a 'Jack' in our classrooms and schools before. Before I knew it, Jack was on detention and the workshop ended and when the students filtered out, we were the only two people left. He jumped up and ran to the piano in the hall and said "Miss, can I play you something?" to which I replied of course.

To this day, I don't have the words to describe the beauty that erupted in that room. There was music of course, but in addition, there was a boy

exuding confidence, passion and happiness and I was captivated! We sat down afterwards, and he told me that his older brother had been School Captain and Dux and he was the troublemaker and was well known for it. He told me that he was struggling with his mental health and that his music teacher was a 'champion' (in his words, not mine) and that he was able to confide in him... magic. This young boy had found someone to talk to and I knew that he was being supported to get the help he needed. As I reflect on that time, I get goosebumps, because it cements everything that I believe to be true about supporting young people. You don't have to be a counsellor or a psychologist to be able to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people BUT you do need to have the skills, knowledge and confidence to do it.

It takes a community to raise and support a young person.



Kim Huckerby Founder/Director The Wellbeing Affect
www.thewellbeingaffect.com.au

BENEFITS OF YOGA FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Ryan Chhajed, Founder Minderley

Yoga creates children who are bright lights in this world, increasing their self-awareness and strengthening their bodies – Shakta Khalsa

“We like you already”
“You are the boy teacher!”
“What happened to your hair?”
“I love yoga, it helps me calm down”

These are some of the things that I would normally hear when I walk into a room full of pre-schoolers to take them through a 45-minute yoga class. During this time, we practice yoga poses, do breathing and mindfulness exercises and in between take a break to sing and dance as well. By the end of the class children are happier and calmer and I think to myself that I have the best job in the world.

Almost 5000 years old, Yoga (meaning union or yoke) is the practice of accessing and integrating all facets of our being i.e., body, mind, and spirit, in the pursuit of inner peace and harmony. With my own yoga practice, I realised that we adults are used to thinking of people and things as being outside of us, however, as we delve further, we might realise that we are weaved much closer than we think. As such all perception is within. Everything we see, smell, hear, feel and touch is a perception of what we are experiencing outwardly. And the more we absorb this we realise that we feel more and more connected to everything and everyone. We feel alive and happy. This is how we can explain yoga to adults, at least the ones who are interested in hearing it. But mostly, it is sufficient for me to say to most adults that yoga is good for you.

However, we need to explain yoga to kids in the simplest way by using terms and language that they can easily relate to. The way I explain yoga to kids is that it is a kind of exercise, it involves movement where we do lots of different poses and connect to our breathing. Essentially, if we cut out the fancy poses, peaceful studios, and expensive yoga pants, that is what we are left with. All we need to practice yoga is our body. Whether or not a child excels in sport, yoga is something I guarantee that they can do. Yoga is fast becoming one of the most popular complementary health practices with more and more children and teens practicing yoga. Many schools are now offering movement and mindfulness programs to help reduce stress, improve mood as well as promote physical fitness.

Children are now growing up in a vastly different world. Our pace of life has fastened dramatically, parents are busier then ever. Immense pressures at schools, relentless lessons, and competitive sports only add to the mix. Do not even get me started on the impact of technology and video games. We sometimes forget that these influences can be stressful for our children. The pace of our children’s lives can have a significant negative impact on their joy for living and learning. Yoga practice helps children and teens in many ways:

1. IMPROVE FITNESS AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Yoga helps in developing a strong connection between body awareness, breath, and movement. The various poses of yoga help in improving coordination, balance, strength, and flexibility. I like to compare yoga to music; it relaxes the mind as well the body. Yoga strengthens the muscles



while building flexibility. The practice of yoga in the early childhood and teenage years is much more beneficial than the standard gym workouts.

2. REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY

This is one of the most underrated benefits for yoga. Due to the fast pace of life, yoga, through breath and awareness provides children with the space to step back and regulate responses in a calm and thoughtful manner. As such yoga is akin to mindful movement. Yoga is an effective, natural, and safe outlet to release stress.

3. IMPROVED FOCUS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The core principle of yoga is body awareness. As we move through a variety of stretches and poses the brain learns to notice and acknowledge every muscle movement. The other aspects of yoga, such as guided meditation and breathing can help the mind realise a sharper sense of concentration. By learning to live in the moment on the mat, children can learn to concentrate fully on the present moment off the mat. This can help them mentally refocus on important tasks resulting in better academic performance.

4. IMPROVED BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM

The body goes through a lot of changes during the teenage years, teens can feel discomfort from growing pains, acne, sweating more, period pains (for girls), a crack in the vocal cords (for boys) and hair growing in places where there wasn’t hair before! As such teenagers may have to deal with image issues, peer pressure as well as bullying. From a spiritual point of view yoga creates an accepting and safe environment, rooted in the principle of non-judgement. Yoga helps kids feel more connected to accepting of their boy.

5. DISCIPLINE AND SELF-REGULATION


The practice of yoga itself inculcates discipline, strength, mind, and body control for kids. Yoga helps in calming the body and mind which means children can learn how to control negativity. When taught with mindfulness, yoga has significant advantages over traditional physical activity. Yoga can help reduce impulsivity, increase patience, and improve the ability to regulate attention.

6. IMPROVED SLEEP

When it comes to sleep, teenagers are just like babies. They need more sleep than the average adult as it is a time the brain in undergoing development and lack of sleep may cause moods to fluctuate. Numerous studies have shown that those who practice yoga sleep deeper and better. A good night’s sleep means better memory, better immune system, and improved creativity. Many studies have linked yoga’s benefit to improved sleep. Yoga’s combination of mindfulness breathing, movement and stretching can do wonders when it comes to improving the quality of sleep.

Just like adults, children confront physical, social, and emotional challenges or conflicts, a disciplined and regular yoga practice that includes breathing techniques, behavioural guidelines, as well as physical postures can immensely be beneficial for them.

Ryan Chhajed | www.minderley.com.au



OUR THOUGHTS CREATE OUR REALITY THROUGH ENERGY

I really want change but I don't know how ...

Energy is everything and everything is energy ... Albert Einstein

Every interaction that you have, in every moment, of every day, is energetic. It is never not present. The more you understand how it operates the more equipped you are to shift your life experiences. The currency of energy is vibration and frequency.

What does this even mean? Well, all things are made up of atoms, which contain energy and vibrate at different frequencies. Humans are energy stored in mass particle form.

So how do you know that energy is real?

Rub your hands together, vigorously, and for a full 30 seconds. Feel the texture of your hands, the heat that is generating as you rub and after 30 secs, hold your hands 15 cms apart. Now, slowly and repeatedly, move them closer and further apart ... can you feel something invisible? This is energy.

When you walk into a crowded room, people will feel your energy before they see you physically and you will decide whether you like someone or not within 7 seconds – not because of how they look but because of how they feel – energetically. It’s unconscious and occurs within seconds ... but it happens.

The Law of Attraction is one of many Universal laws and is based in energy. Like attracts like – that’s pure science. We have a life force (energy) within us and when we die, our life force goes somewhere else because, by the law of physics, energy cannot be created or destroyed. Knowing that we are energy and that like attracts like makes manifestation powerful. The energy of our thoughts (manifestation) allows us to attract those things, that we focus on, into our lives. By example: if you focus on money from a place of scarcity, you will find it difficult to ever have enough money. When you think of money from an abundance mindset, money comes your way easily. We have over 60,000 thoughts every day and we have 93% of the same thoughts today as we had yesterday. Over time and with this repetition, we develop patterns of thought because

the neural pathway, in the brain, becomes so entrenched by habitual thinking.

Where focus goes ... energy flows ... and like attracts like. So simplified, our thoughts attract our reality.

The power of our thoughts and language is severely underestimated. We are magnets of attraction, because of our biofield (the electromagnetic field surrounding our bodies) and negative people attract negative experiences and vice versa with positive people. So often, we focus our thoughts and conversations on what we don’t want to have happen and then guess what ... those things eventuate because we have energetically called them in, without being consciously aware of it.

In our Surviving to Thriving school programs, we create awareness for young people and staff to understand what their habitual thoughts and language usage are and then teach practical steps that can be engaged to shift them. With practice, each individual can create a new reality. It is incredibly empowering when we know that change is possible for anyone who desires it and that we do it for ourselves – no external elements are necessary. By thinking more empowering and loving thoughts, we attract a life of fulfilment and alignment with our values and what we want.

Without awareness, we remain loyal to thoughts that are keeping us stuck and life becomes a hamster wheel of circulating thoughts that do not serve us. Youth focus can literally shift from self-hatred and self-sabotage to being more self-serving and nurturing. And the younger a person learns these skills, the better for them and society because we all desire to live happy and fulfilled lives however many have no idea of how to change their current reality and believe that it is outside of themselves, which keeps them disempowered.

Your thoughts influence your choices which determine 100% of your experiences – EVERY TIME and your point of view is a reflection of YOUR current reality.

Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at change ... Wayne Dyer

Sue Raffan | Sue Raffan Coaching
www.sueraffancoaching.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	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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Western Australia

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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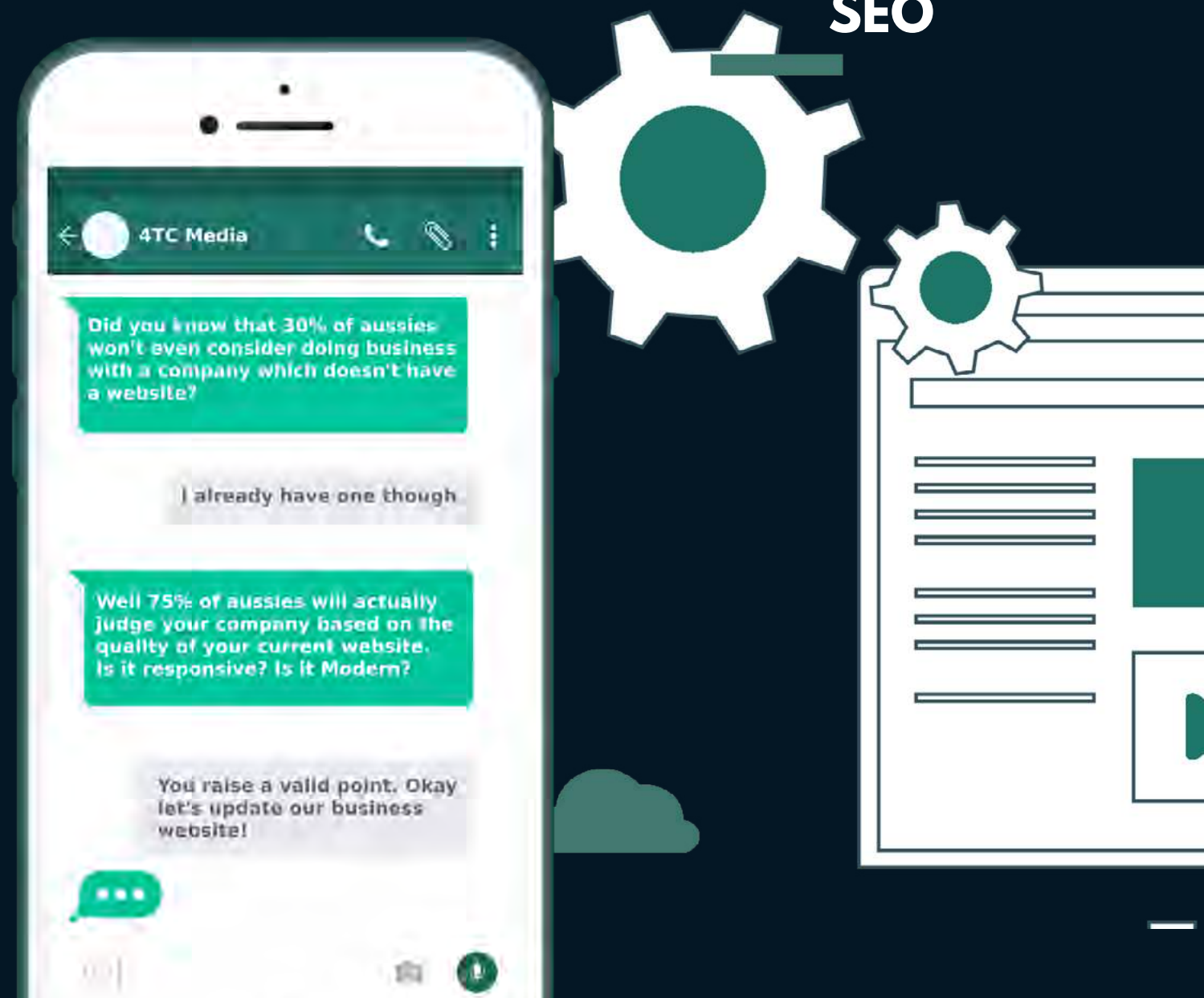


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