



Newsletter

Date 3rd June, 2014

Issue 8

Halifax State School

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Important dates

3rd June – P & C Meeting

9th June – Queens Birthday Public Holiday

21st June – Halifax School Markets

23rd June – Fire Ed (P-2)

27th June – Report Cards distributed

27th June – Last day Term 2

Absent Letters and phone calls

If your child or children are absent from School, for any reason, could you please make sure you notify us as to the absence (either before or after) by making a phone call, sending a note with the reason or emailing

the.principal@halifaxss.eq.edu.au.

Messages about absences due to illness, personal reasons, etc from School are important, as we need to ensure that our records are up to date.

Attendance

Attendance target 98%

Currently sitting at 97 %



From The Principals Desk

Dear Parents

Schools Disciplinary Audit

Our schools disciplinary audit will be on the 16 July. During this time an auditor will talk to students, staff and members of the P and C regarding our behaviour management strategies and teaching behaviour plans. As we have great students this will be a great welcome to show how well we have safe supportive learning environments and students that are eager to learn.

P and C Treasurer vacant

We are in desperate need of a new treasurer. Deb Marsden as relinquished her position and we miss her greatly. Deb was a huge asset to our P and C team and I appreciated her involvement in all areas of the school.

Hopefully she will enjoy her break. As a result we need a treasurer and quickly as we need to sign off on cheques.

You Can Do It

Our school is involved in You Can Do It education. This is a very successful program and each week we will have a new focus. This week's YCDI focus: Organisation

You Can Do It! Education's (YCDI's) main purpose is to support communities, schools, and homes in a collective effort to optimize the social, emotional, and academic outcomes of all young people. Its unique contribution is in identifying the social and emotional capabilities that all young people need to acquire in order to be successful in school, experience wellbeing, and have positive relationships including making contributions to others and the community (good citizenship). YCDI's mission is realized through the following beliefs and actions:

- YCDI's focus is on building social, emotional, and motivational capacity of young people rather than on their problems and deficits. It encourages prevention, promotion, and intervention efforts (school, home and community) in order to build the social and emotional strengths of young people.

- As a strength-building approach, YCDI also seeks to build the capabilities of adults (community, school, home) associated with positive outcomes in young people, including positive, caring relationships with young people, providing for their safety, high expectations for achievement and behaviour, involving young people in decision-making and providing them with special responsibility, accommodating young people's interests, communicating and modelling of social and emotional capabilities including values and resilience, and a high quality academic program that provides young people with multiple opportunities for success.

- YCDI sees the development of social and emotional capacity of "at risk" and disadvantaged youth as a means to "level the playing field." However, it is clear that in order to change the developmental trajectory of young people with poor mental health (emotional, social and behavioral challenges) and learning outcomes and to accelerate their social and emotional development, it is vital that schools, homes and communities be transformed so that the responsibility for supporting and educating, including quality social and emotional learning experiences and caring relationships, is shared throughout the community.

Donald Pritchard

What are we up to

P to 2

P-2 have been learning about using descriptive words to make their writing more interesting. In Maths we have been learning to tell the time.

The students are also involved in an individual reading program. Please continue reading with your child each night as reading is fundamental to all learning. Some of the activities you can do with your child to promote literacy are:

***Play word games that encourage children to learn sounds. For example, 'I Spy' – 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with f-f-f. What do you think I'm looking at that starts with that sound?'**

***Ask your child about words that rhyme. For example, 'What other words sound like car?'**

***Ask your child to make a sound or sound combination, then think of words with that sound. For example, 'What's a funny sound? Mo? What sounds can you make with mo?' ('moan', 'mope' and 'moat', and so on).**



What are we up to

3 – 7

This week students are learning:

English

Preparing, planning and drafting a literary recount.
Analysing texts

Science

Changing states of matter
Separating

Maths

Location and transformation (3, 4)
Geometric reasoning (5/6/7)

NAIDOC

A reminder money is due in for NAIDOC Activities. The cost is \$5 per item.



Ingham Arts Festival

The Ingham Arts Festival is approaching once again. Due to teachers' high work demands the students will only be participating in the Primary Verse Speaking Choir at a school level. However, parents are welcome to enter their children in any other event they choose. All work for other events must be completed at home. Booklets with all the information required including closing dates are on sale at Piottos.

Rugby Union Representative

Congratulations to Callum Thompson on representing Halifax State School as part of an Ingham State School Rugby Union team to play other schools in Townsville. GOOD LUCK for Friday.

READING

Encouraging A Love Of Reading

Children usually go through three reading stages as they learn. You can help and support your children during each of these stages with some of the techniques listed below. Please be aware that these are guides only – each child learns at their own pace.

Role-play readers:

During the role play stage children take an interest in books and the writing they see around them every day. They start to imitate you, such as holding a book the right way up and turning the pages carefully. They often pretend to read by using the pictures and their memory to retell stories.

Encouraging A Love Of Reading

You can support your children by:

- reading aloud as often as possible to help them learn how important reading is
- reading aloud to them to expand their use of words
- encouraging and praising their attempts when they pretend to read
- looking at the illustrations and seeing how they help the story
- reading favourite stories again and again – familiarity builds confidence!

Experimental readers:

When children progress to the experimental reader stage they often read by using pictures or their memory of the story. They may identify some words but are more focused on the meaning rather than reading every word in the right way.

You can support your children by:

- encouraging them to 'have a go' at reading and praising them continually
- talking with them about the characters and story line
- encouraging them to express opinions about what happens in the story
- talking about the letters, sounds, words and interesting features in the books and other things you read.

3 Early readers:

Early readers are able to read books they know confidently.

When they read new books, they may read slowly and deliberately as they focus on the printed word, trying to read exactly what is on the page. Children also begin to tell you what they think about the things they have read and why they think it.

You can support your children by:

- reading to them as often as possible to help them develop their reading skills
- encouraging them to talk about what happens in the story
- encouraging them to express an opinion about the things they read
- pointing out and talking about common words
- encouraging them to try different ways to work out a word they don't know such as guessing, using clues you give them, sounding the word out, reading on to the end of the sentence and reading the sentence again
- encouraging them to talk about how they worked out a word they didn't know.

This week's article

The Psychology of Children's Mental Health

Professor Michael E. Bernard
Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne

It's Time to Educate All Young People that "Things Are Neither Good Nor Bad But Thinking Makes It So".

Over the past 10 or more years, the psychology of children's mental health and wellbeing has been intensively studied to understand the attitudes and patterns of thinking that are associated with not only poor mental health such as extreme anxiety, depression and anger, but also with positive mental health and wellbeing. We have learned a great deal from the theory and research of Albert Ellis (e.g., Ellis & Bernard, 2006), Martin Seligman (e.g., 1998), Albert Bandura (e.g., 1997) and others including my own research (e.g., Bernard, 2008) who have put the psychology of children's mental health and wellbeing under the microscope.

This collective work has led to important new insights; important, because we now have a new "mental health roadmap" that enables us to achieve two things. One is to understand and through education weaken those attitudes and ways of thinking that negatively impact mental health. The other is to strengthen, through education, those attitudes that support positive thinking, feeling and behaving to promote the wellbeing of young people.

Drawing from the research, let me now describe four important concepts and principles surrounding the role of cognition and patterns of thinking which underpin children's mental health and wellbeing.

1. There are two dimensions of children's psychological functioning each of which impacts their mental health and wellbeing.

Children are born with an innate capacity to think irrationally (in ways that are not logical/sensible, empirical and helpful). This human disposition exerts its influence across the life span and precludes the possibility of perfect mental health.

What moderates the influence of irrationality is the development of logical reasoning abilities and the capacity for rational thinking which emerge around the age of eight (Piaget's concrete operational stage of development) with abstract reasoning abilities developing more fully around the age of 12 (formal operational stage of development). Piaget described the stage of mental development of two to eight-year olds as "pre-concrete operational" with young children's thinking displaying the following characteristics:

- drawing arbitrary inferences - conclusions not based on evidence or when evidence contradicts conclusion
- selective abstraction - focusing on a detail taken out of context, ignoring salient features of the situation
- magnification/minimisation - errors in evaluating significance of event
- personalisation - tendency to relate external events to themselves when no basis for making connection
- overgeneralisation - drawing a conclusion based on limited and isolated events
- dichotomous thinking - tendency to place events into opposite categories (e.g., good-bad)

Older children, adolescents and adults who experience extreme anger, depression and anxiety revert to cognitive functioning and ways of thinking that are characteristic of this pre-concrete operational stage of development.

Children who manifest mental health problems often present with developmental delays in their capacity to think logically and rationally concerning affective-interpersonal issues (e.g., have difficulty keeping things in perspective, personalising negative experiences) as well as in the development of other emotional self-management skills (e.g., relaxation, finding someone to talk with). They also are dominated by a range of irrational beliefs including self-depreciation, low frustration tolerance, and the lack of acceptance of others.

2. Young people are active in constructing the meaning of life's events.

We have now learned that the impact of events on young people's mental health and wellbeing is greatly influenced by their attitudes and thoughts about what happens in their lives. This key finding has produced a revolution in the understanding, treatment and prevention of children's mental health problems. Rather than viewing child and adolescent mental health responses to their environment as being caused by the environment (e.g., rejection by others, academic difficulties), we now know that mental health responses of young people are strongly influenced by the way they think about and talk to themselves about what is going on in their world. It is not the world but their interpretations and evaluations of the world that are key to understanding the psychology of mental health.

3. The attitude of "Self-Acceptance" is a cornerstone of children's wellbeing while "Self-Depreciation" is a leading contributor to anxiety, depression and anger.

Many young people who get depressed or anxious or very angry have a tendency to put themselves down (irrational belief referred to as "self-depreciation"). When difficult or threatening circumstances occur (no one wanting to play with them, not reading as well as others, not being selected for a sporting team, having a break-up with a friend, having a run in with a teacher or parent), they have a habit of irrationally concluding: "This shows that I'm no good. I must be a real loser and will always be a loser." It can be seen that this thinking is irrational thinking as it is not logical/sensible, true (based on evidence) or helpful.

"Self-acceptance" is a rational, positive attitude that helps young people cope with negative life events such as not achieving their goals and being rejected by others without becoming depressed. "Self-acceptance" means that children do not rate themselves in terms of their behaviour and are

able to separate judgments of their actions from judgments of their self-worth. They acknowledge and accept responsibility for their *traits* and *behaviours*-both good and bad- without evaluating *themselves* as good or bad. They accept themselves unconditionally without having to prove themselves. In contrast to "self-depreciation," "self-acceptance" is seen in the following example of rational self-talk that accompanies not doing well on an exam: "Even though what happened was bad and maybe I didn't do as well as I could have, I know I am not a total failure. I am still smart and capable and I will do better next time." My own research has shown clearly that children who have difficulty managing their emotions are self-downers almost by nature (Bernard & Cronan, 1999).

Other negative, irrational attitudes and thinking errors discovered in research can impact children's mental health. These need to be weakened and re-structured with more positive, rational ones. The negative and irrational attitudes include:

- *pessimism*("I can't do it and never will"),
- *external locus of control*("I have no control over what happens to me and how I feel and behave"),
- *low frustration tolerance*, ("Everything in life should be fun, comfortable and easy and I cannot stand frustration of any sort."),
- *intolerance of others*("People should behave the way I want and do my bidding when they do not or when they are different, they deserve to be punished.") and
- *catastrophising*("Things that happen to me such as mistakes, being laughed at, or not having my way are awful and terrible, the worst things in the world.")

4. Well-researched mental health and wellbeing prevention and intervention programs exist for use in schools that can help all young people to think more rationally and, as a consequence, reduce poor mental health and promote positive wellbeing.

The point to be made here is that from an individual psychology perspective, young people can be taught more mentally healthy ways to think about themselves, others and the world. However, while explicit teaching of the ABCs of mental health and wellbeing has a well-established tradition in the field of mental health promotion and positive psychology, those that implement such programs and those in education and schools who make decisions about which programs should be taught to all young people do not always agree that mental health concepts and skills can be explicitly taught. It is often the case in education that wellbeing is considered as a social and cultural phenomena with solutions being found in the promotion of more caring environments and relationships and not through the empowerment of the individual.

Many evaluation studies have appeared in the professional literature that collectively demonstrate that young people can be taught concepts and principles of positive mental health including how to cognitively restructure their own thinking to rely more on positive, rational functioning rather than negative, irrational mental functioning. They can, for example, be taught to challenge and change their tendencies towards self-downing and to become more self-accepting (e.g., Hajzler & Bernard, 1991; Bernard, Ellis & Terjesen, 2006)

Is the individual psychology of young people the only influence on their mental health and wellbeing? The research indicates that there are a host of environmental factors (e.g., parents, teachers, peers) as well as inherited biological dispositions that also impact wellbeing outcomes. However, it is important that people involved in developing mental health policies and programs, do not view poor mental health as purely a community, family or social problem. Students need to be "brought up to speed" with the mental health lessons that have been learned over many years; namely, "People are not affected by events but by the view they take of events" (Epictetus, 2nd Century A.D.).

I will end this brief overview of the psychology of children's mental health with a quote from a year 9 male student who attended a group counselling program I conducted for students referred for "low self-esteem." I believe his view captures the potential, importance and power of teaching all young people about the psychology of mental health -not just those who are in crisis.

"That before coming here, everything that went wrong I used to blame it on myself, I used to say I was no good at anything, and why don't I just kill myself. I didn't know the meaning of Rational or Erational (sic) thoughts-they have slowly changed the way I think, so I don't get upset as I used to. I used to think of my bad points but now I also think of my good points, so now I don't go off my rocker. I am lucky to be able to think Rational thoughts."

References

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Recent events

Romanello Shield

Congratulations to all of the children who competed in the annual Romanello Shield. Halifax State School was proudly represented in the Juniors and combined with Macknade to represent in the Seniors. The Senior Team including Oliver Putzka, Elijah Grasnick, Jacob Lewis, Trenyce Pearce and Erin Begg played with great team work to make the A Grade Semi Finals. The Juniors excelled and won their way into the B Grade Final. They lost this final but proudly received runners up medals for their efforts. Players in this team were Uwen Putzka, Olivia Mallett, Ryhan Hamper, Callum Thompson, Michael Cassady, Tess Hinschen, Liam Mallett and Janae Pearce. All players showed terrific sportsmanship. A big thankyou to Jimmy Thompson for coaching the Junior team.



P & C Luncheon

The Senior students and Leaders along with help from Louise Jones prepared a P & C Lunch for any of the parent volunteers to attend. The parents thoroughly enjoyed being treated to a lunch as a thankyou for the time and effort they put into the school to make it a better place for all students.



P & C Meeting—The **P & C General Meeting is on Tuesday, 3rd June 2014 at 3.30pm at Halifax Community Centre.** All are welcome.

Presidents Word –

Hi all, just a quick note to let you all know what’s been happening at the P&C – we are now waiting on grants to be approved for tuckshop and sporting events (fingers crossed).

Big thanks to the school especially Louise Jones (again) , Mr Pritchard and fellow staff and students for acknowledging the great work the Volunteers we have at the school such as: Louise Jones, Jasmine Pearce, Railene Eveleigh, Michelle Thompson, Deb Marsden & Uwe Putzka. Apologise if I forgot anyone.

Romanello Soccer proved a big day again this year with the Halifax Junior team making the B grade Final while the Mackfax team tried very hard and worked well as a team but the competitors were too strong. A great day was had by all and lots of fun, which is what it is all about.

Speaking of Soccer, congrats to Erin and Trenyce for being selected to represent their school and town in the Herbert River Team which played in Townsville on weekend. Many towns from as far as Whitsunday attended and played hard to try out for the NQ Soccer team. The girls team was defeated and although they weren’t selected they made us proud anyway and learnt more soccer and teamwork skills while having fun in the bargain.

Congratulations to all those who attended Relay 4 Life on Saturday. Half of the school attended, proudly walked laps of the showgrounds and raised money for a good cause.

Markets will be on the Saturday 21st June, so we will be holding our **next meeting on the Tuesday the 17th June** to finalise event, we would appreciate parents coming to this meeting to offer any assistance they can as we only have a small crew of volunteers...so come on parents come on down!!! For more information contact myself on 0497653878 or Trisha (Admin) 47777132.

Position vacant: P&C Treasurer applications will be accepted at next meeting or by contacting myself.

Geri Stanfield
President
 Halifax P&C Association
 Ph: 0497 653 878

Tuckshop Roster— Tuckshop roster for the remainder Term 2 is below

Date	Workers	Baker
10 th June	Jasmine Pearce Cindy Pamenter	Prachern Morley
17 th June	Josie Barrett Deb Marsden	Kim Lake
24 th June	Louise Jones Michelle Thompson	Davina Hamper