Bridging the Gap: **Adapting school group programs into a mutual aid framework**
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Flinders University's social work program, in Adelaide Australia, places up to 60 social work students in school settings each semester where they will often facilitate activity-based student groups. Schools promote and utilise 'off the shelf' social and emotional group based well-being packages, usually from nationally endorsed well-being frameworks such as *KidsMatter* and *MindMatters*. These programs were developed in collaboration with the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Principals' Institute, Early Childhood Australia were funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. (http://www.youcandoiteducation.com/whatis.html)

The *Bridging the Gap* project developed a range of strategies to help students bridge the gap between the prescribed 'off the shelf' group programs and the social group work mutual aid model that they were being taught in their courses at university. As part of this project social work students analyzed a collection of specific school packages purchased for this project. They placed the activities and instructions along side a mutual aid social group work framework and identified the aspects where there was common ground between the two approaches. Some unexpected findings were unearthed, including the frequency with which social work students could utilise the tailored designed programs, expanding on them to deliver group work programs more in line with mutual aid philosophy and roles. A shift in thinking was required but the predesigned programs provided ideas, structure, and content that readily adapted to delivery via a mutual aid framework. Simple examples of this adaptation consisted of involving the group participants in decisions about activities or discussing the school's rationale for asking them to join this particular group.

The beginning of the school year in Australia starts in early February and social work students began their placements at that time. Students analyzed the philosophy, aims, weekly session plans, activities, resources and required skills involved in the package/model they were working with. The various elements and themes of these programs were identified and examined in relation to compatibility with social group work, identifying where incompatibilities existed and focusing on how these programs could be used by social work students in a way that did not conflict with their social work knowledge, values and skills. Social group work has a long history and scholarship related to viewing activities as "program" and of linking such activities to the aims and purposes for the existence of the group. It is this framework that was presented to the students in their academic studies, including the recent work of Norma Lang's non-deliberative practice. (Lang, 2016)

Flinders University Schools' Placement Model

The numbers of social work students engaging in school settings for their field education placements is significant, representing around one quarter of all students on placement each semester. Substantial resourcing has been intentionally allocated to the

what is called the *Schools' Placement Model* over the past two year, in order to help deliver quality placements; to maximise learning opportunities and outcomes for students; to ensure a positive impact and experience for partnering schools; and to raise the profile and value of social work placements within school contexts. Social work students are given two full days of workshops before their placements begin which are designed to provide information and understanding around school contexts; social work roles and functions within school settings and to provide a description of the roles they will carry out in schools. Students in school placements also engage in specific discussion forums throughout the semester with their piers, where themes and topics relating to social work learning within the school space are explored.

In South Australia, counselling and well-being staff members in schools have normally not been social workers, but rather teachers with additional counselling qualifications. This trend has started to shift in the last 2 years with funding more directed towards social workers but generally social work placement students have an 'on-site' supervisor who is not a social worker and an external supervisor who is social work qualified to meet professional accreditation requirements. This social work supervisor supports students to reflect on their learning through a social work lens. Most students are placed in schools in pairs to provide mutual support and opportunity to allow them to engage in shared projects. Appendix A outlines around 20 types of groups directly involving social work students in 2016; in roles as facilitators, co-facilitators or program developers. Social work students in schools had a significant role in developing group programs to meet identified children's needs and they also facilitated many prescribed, 'off the shelf' groups programs at various schools. This was an encouraging result from these placements.

Semester 1

In the first semester students attended a two-hour university class (taught by the project coordinators) and students in school settings were asked to report in detail about the groups they were facilitating, indicating the difference and similarities between prescribed group programs and mutual aid group work. As students brought their own group assignment into class they sought input and suggestions from peers and project coordinators, developing a themed presentation that was then delivered at the end of semester to the class. In presentations, students identified commonalities (whilst maintaining respect and appreciation of the prescribed models) while at the same time also identifying the ways in which a focus on mutual aid and a clearer understanding of social group work could strength the group experience for the school children and young people. The social work students gained the confidence to use mutual aid group work skills in their placement settings leading to more cohesion with their professional function and role. They shared with the class how this confidence developed and influenced their interactions with teachers around their groups.

Each presentation identified a pre-designed school group program and then focused on one stage of their group's development to address the key characteristics of mutual aid such as tuning in, contracting, working together or termination. They then 'unpacked' their prescribed program and explored the aims, values, philosophies and skills of the models. Congruence and incongruence between the two approaches was identified and beginning recommendations made that would support fellow students in looking at school group work through the mutual aid lens. Social work students were able to

identify the aims, objectives and philosophies of the prescribed packages and to consider their fit with mutual aid group work. Generally there was a strong resonance with social work values and goals around growing children's social and emotional competencies. The students in Semester 1 came to the following conclusions.

Social work students have the skills and are generally given enough autonomy to adapt many packages to a social work mutual aid perspective.
- Students facilitated many tailored and individually designed school programs which were devised to respond to specific needs in school community such as cooking programs, drumming programs, friendship groups, lunchtime clubs and groups to support children experiencing anxiety.
- Social work students understood and valued the 'tuning in' process and saw this as the foundation for a successful group.
- Social work students did not always find it easy to 'influence' how teachers thought the group work programs should be delivered and this was perceived by students as being challenging.
- The predesigned, well-being packages designed for a whole class rather than a small group were harder to facilitate using mutual aid group work approaches and remained very educational.

Students were able to identify congruence and compatibility between prescribed packaged group programs and mutual aid social group work.
- Both approaches have a mutual focus on development of strengths and social-emotional capabilities rather than limitations.
- The packaged groups promote helping others through social responsibility and positive attitudes.
- Many packages attempt to address Australian aboriginal culture through the expression of "Hard Yakka" (Hard Work).
- Both approaches encourage students to use their own skills and the skills of the group to solve problems.
- There is a mutual focus on bettering self rather than just 'winning'.
- Both approaches attempt to bring awareness of unhelpful behaviour and to reinforce positive behaviour.
- Both advocate the need to articulate that children's' skills and values are recognised and appreciated.
- Both perspectives value creativity and acknowledge that facilitators need to adjust and adapt to learners needs and styles, which teachers call 'fine tuning'.
- Both approaches highlight the importance of being able to 'read' the teachable moments and sense children's' emotional states, responding appropriately with awareness, empathy, energy and drive.
- Facilitators in both approaches are encouraged to stand 'outside' the activity and to offer insights, make observations and give help as needed.

Students were able to identify incongruence and incompatibility between prescribed packaged group programs and mutual aid social group work.
- When the packaged program calls for a 'universal approach' (involving a whole class) then the program is not tailored to incorporate individual differences, culture, or special needs.
- When such universal programs are offered, the educational focus is strong and opportunity for 'mutual aid' more limited as the experience is more similar to 'just another subject'.
- Teachers don't have the time to 'tuning in' to student's needs nor the opportunity to tailor content and approach accordingly.
- Mutual aid assumes a level of voluntariness. When group members are not voluntary this is acknowledged and impacts the contract and other interactions. Children in schools are often 'selected' by teaching staff for groups sometimes without being given a rationale and this impacts on group cohesion and genuine group participation.
- The use of professional 'authority' when facilitating groups can vary greatly between a teacher and social work student. Children are often given punitive consequences for a perceived lack of participation in the group or for 'poor behaviour' in a group. A social work perspective attempts to understand the behaviour.

Semester 2

The *Bridging the Gap* project learned from the first semester and adjusted the project in significant ways. In semester 2 students began to 'drill into the details' of their groups identifying the knowledge and skills they utilised and then presenting a number of role-plays to the class where the skills were demonstrated. The sections illustrated skills and techniques at each phase of the group's development; the facilitator's role in situations of conflict; decisions around group membership, roles adopted by the children in various situations; and managing challenges within the groups.

At the conclusion of the role-plays the students pointed out the aspects of the group approaches which were derived from the prepared group packages and where they had added quality to the group process by introducing interventions from a mutual aid perspective. They pointed out that educators and social workers facilitate groups differently and that social workers paid more attention to different interactions within the group. Certainly the students felt that the packaged models were generally sound and adhered to a number of principles that were also found in mutual aid group work. But they also pointed out that the interpretation and facilitation of the packaged models through using a mutual aid lens resulted in subtle differences in the atmosphere, and in participation and a sense of group ownership experienced by the children. The role-plays led to lengthy discussions and questions from the class members. The students in Semester 2 came to the following conclusions.

The students in Semester 2 came to the following conclusions.
- The breadth, depth and range of group work in schools was extensive and appeared to be increasing (see appendix A).
- Social work students were increasingly encouraged to develop group work programs that meet identified children's needs in their school contexts.

- Social work students were increasingly asked to develop and run group work programs autonomously and were often seen by teachers as the 'experts' in the social and emotional domains of children.
- School educators increasingly recognised student social workers capacity, purpose and roles in their schools resulting in more meaningful allocation of group work projects and activities.
- The time that was spent discussing group programs served to emphasize and remind social work students about the importance and validity of group work in school placements and of group work theories, especially mutual aid theory.
- Social work students strongly valued the opportunities to see group programs 'in action' through the simulated role-plays.
- The current focus on Norma Lang's non-deliberative social group work and activity based group work provided a new depth of understanding and integrity for the students in school placements aiding them to facilitate their groups as social workers.

Overall Summary of the *Bridging the Gap* project
- The project led to the development of a consolidation of resources around groups, which are now available for use by students going to placements in schools settings.
- A better understanding has emerged around the breadth and depth of group work that is undertaken by social work students within school sites.
- Future social work students will be able to tune in more significantly prior to the commencement of their school placement to the ways in which they can connect, utilise and apply a mutual aid social group work perspectives as outlined in their university group work classes, to groups they may run at school placements.
- The mutual aid approach will be formally identified during the students' two-day orientation program.
- Student exemplars have been developed and will be available to future school based social work students.
- Video recordings of the role plays used in social work classes and associated commentary by students which linking their work to mutual aid group work theory, concepts and skills, have been retained will be available to future school based social work students.
- Such recordings are technologically 'rough' and a future project would be to repeat the role-plays to produce a better quality video.
- The project has spotlighted the importance of theoretical input tailored to the needs of the social work students in school based placements
- Non-deliberative group work practice has been highlighted as an important perspective to include in group work courses in the social work curriculum
- There is a dearth of Australian social group work material and practice examples. In Appendix B students' group work from both semesters is included to support and help prepare students for placements in schools or other organizations involving group programs.
- This material is a contribution to international educational examples of groupwork collaborations and experiences.

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With thanks to the International Association for Social Work with Groups, SPARC - Special Projects Application Review Committee (6/3/17)

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		APPENDIX A				
Group Program	**Aims**	**Author or developer**	**Prescribed package or Student designed**	**Open or Closed**	**Type of group**	**Number of sessions**
Play is the Way	A philosophy of behaviour education and student self-regulation that fosters independent, self-motivated, empathetic, life-long learners	Wilson McCaskill, purchase resources,	Prescribed Package	Open	Activity based

Primary school | Ongoing |
| What's the Buzz | Designed to teach children how to think socially and make friendship work. The programme engages children into feeling friendship together and connects young people and offers them the skills to belong. | Mark Le Messurier **and** Madhavi Nawana Parker | Prescribed Package | Closed | Activity based, educative mutual aid

Primary school | 14 sessions |
| Drumbeat | Designed to improve social and health outcomes – reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. Beneficial impact of rhythmic interventions on primal brain systems associated with anxiety and emotional control. | Holyoake, professional purchase manuals and resources | Prescribed Package | Closed | Therapeutic non-deliberative

Primary and Secondary school | 10 sessions |
| Program Achieve | Development of young people's social and emotional capabilities, including: Confidence (academic, social), Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along, and Emotional Resilience. | Michael E. Bernard, purchase manuals and resources | Prescribed Package | Open | Educative, activity based

Primary | 10 sessions |
| Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) | Targets the development of social and emotional competence in order to build children's protective factors and decrease the risk of behavioural and social problems. | Carol A. Kusché and Mark T. Greenberg purchase manuals and resources | Prescribed Package | Open | Educative, activity based

Primary | 10 sessions |
| Circle Time | Restorative practice focussed –aims to build community, restore relationships & conflict | Multiple resources available | Prescribed Package | Open | Mutual aid, educative Primary | 2-3 X per term |
| Lego Club | Children develop social | Multiple | Prescribed | Closed | Educative, | facilitator decision |

	skills through collaboration on group projects through the use of Lego®	resources available	Package		activity based Primary	
iMsocial Group	Targets specific areas of social learning such as communication skills and self safety skills to help children interact with peers and build friendships	Autism South Australia, resources and support available	Prescribed Package	Closed	Educative, activity based Primary	Up to 34 sessions
Positive Education Groups/Classes	Focuses on specific skills that assist students to strengthen their relationships, build positive emotions, enhance personal resilience, promote mindfulness and encourage a healthy lifestyle.	Based on Positive Psychology, multiple resources available	Both	Open	Educative, activity based Primary and Secondary	Group Decision and priority of school
LGBTQI Groups	Opportunity for students to meet and discuss/identify individual and shared needs and plan collective action	n/a	Student designed	Open	Mutual aid, social action Secondary	Ongoing based on group need
Student Representative Council (SRC) or Youth Empowerment Groups	Generally selected students consult across the school community and then engage collectively to share student needs and priorities and to contribute to establishing solutions and implementing initiatives	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Social action Primary and Secondary	Ongoing based on group needs and school needs
Cooking Groups	Activity group designed to support students to develop independent living skills and practice/rehearse a range of social skills including cooperation, problem solving, listening and responding etc	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Activity based, educative Primary and Secondary	Ongoing based on group need
Parent Groups	Can range from opportunities to build connectivity and reduce parental isolation to informing school direction and build school capacity	n/a	Student designed	Open	Mutual aid, collective action Primary and Secondary	Ongoing based on group needs and school needs
Breakfast Clubs	Opportunity to engage informally with children who are often vulnerable and have complex needs. Provides a smooth transition and 'soft landing'	n/a Numerous providers eg Kickstart, Redcross, Foodbank	Student designed	Open	Informal, mutual aid Primary	Ongoing based on group

	into the start of a school day					
Lunchtime Groups eg Art Therapy Group	Lunch time engagement program for children who struggle to maintain meaningful peer relationships. Offers point of safety and connection along with using art as a vehicle for learning and discovery.	n/a	Student designed	Open	Activity based, mutual aid\n\nPrimary	Ongoing based on group needs
Gardening groups	Provides opportunities for students to engage their senses, work outdoors and collaborate in decision making. Can be entrepreneurial	n/a	Student designed	Open or Closed	Activity based, educative\n\nPrimary	Ongoing based on group needs
Nunga Club, 'Big Mob, Little Mob' Aboriginal club	Opportunity for students who identify as Aboriginal (and often others also) to connect with each other and explore and connect to culture.	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Activity based, mutual aid\n\nPrimary or Secondary	Ongoing based on group needs
Kindy Social Skills Group	Targeted at children new to kindy setting with limited previous experience of formal care or children who exhibit challenging behaviours. Play based learning to learn and reinforce social skills	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Activity/play based, educative\n\nPre-school	Ongoing based on group needs
Ice Factor	Positive physical and creative risk taking activities outside of the school context – promotes independent decision making for personal development	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Activity based\n\nSecondary	Ongoing based on group needs
Girl's Group	Primary school students identified as at risk due to self-harming and other behaviours invited to participate. Focus on empowerment, identity formation, rights and responsibilities and building positive support networks	n/a	Student designed	Closed	Activity based, educative, mutual aid\n\nPrimary	8 sessions

Group Work Summaries & Notes by Social Work Students in School Settings

Student Social Work groups in Groups*

- **Play is the Way**
- **Social Action Groups**
- **Cultural Groups**
- **Drumbeat**
- **LGBTIQ Groups**
- **Parent Morning Tea Group**
- **Restorative Practice Groups**
- **What's the Buzz**
- **Program Achieve**

**With thanks to the International Association for Social Work with Groups, SPARC - Special Projects Application Review Committee*

What is it?

Play is the Way focuses on physically interactive games with a supporting language and philosophy. Games require effort and application. They help children understand the value of process in the pursuit of success. Games improve the social, emotional, physical and mental health of children.
- Universal (as opposed to targeted or intensive)
- Whole of Class
- Open (not closed)
- Voluntary? Do children have a choice about participation?

Embed learning
- Teaching social and emotional learning
- Behaviour education – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making
- Power of play – connection and communication the 'bedrock' of play
- Positive social behaviour

What does the resource tell you about: Philosophy and Program Aims
- Govern by consent and not coercion
- Reasoned and responsible children
- 'train children'
- Encouraging play
- Not 'who' they are but what they 'did or 'did not do'
- Empower children with understanding of own behaviour
- Adult belief that they can overcome and achieve
- Honouring strength of character
- Enforce consequence with respect for the dignity and rights of children
- Emotional mastery
- Build optimism and resilience
- Foster bravery
- Significance of relationship between teacher and student – reduce power imbalance

Objectives/Aims
Safe environment in which students 'train' to be independent, self-regulating, self-motivated learners in pursuit of their personal best
Develop students of strong character and decency with social emotional competencies
Foster empathetic students

How philosophy and aims fit with social work?
Values creativity – adjust, adapt, apply to suit learners needs and styles – fine tuning
Role of educator – 'read' the teachable moments, sense emotional state and respond appropriately
Stand 'outside' the game – not a participant – offer insights, make observations, give as little help as possible in playing the game, say just enough and only when necessary
Integrate into curriculum especially use of language and concepts

Teacher qualities – aware, empathetic, energy and drive

Phase/stage of mutual aid group work - TUNING IN
Tuning in to staff concerns and issues is just as important as tuning in to the needs of the group
Understanding ambivalence and working through resistance
Tuning in requires the group member to get in touch with their own feelings about a group of this sort – what do you think/believe about play and opportunities for learning?
Consider how the idea for the group has emerged – how does that fit with the context and the needs in your view?

Tuning in evident in Play is the Way instructional manual
Read game instructions
Revisit philosophy and aims
Working out and organising what you need

What it could include but doesn't:
Thinking about what language and approaches work for you
Considering the different needs and supports required in your class of 30

Key characteristic of mutual aid group work - STRENGTHS BASED PROCESS
Students use own skills and the skills of the group to solve problems
Focus on bettering self rather than 'winning'
'right thing or wrong thing?' – both to bring awareness to unhelpful behaviour or to reinforce positive behaviour – empowerment principle
Skills and values are recognised and appreciated

AGE APPROPRIATE – AWARENESS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
Simple language that is 'to the point'
Talks about the wiring of neural pathways in young children and encouraging self-motivation early rather than constant rewards

POSSIBLE INCONGRUENCE
Taking students from the 'feeling state' to the 'thinking state' – is this always possible with highly heightened/aroused children who have complex trauma or may be on Autism Spectrum?
May not trigger student reflection but may be seen by students as the teacher 'doing' his/her boring behaviour management
Teachers turn the questions into statements 'you're having a weak moment', 'you know that's wrong'
Notion of 'good manners' again discounts the difficulties students with trauma/disability have in recognising and responding to social norms/constructs around manners etc.

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES SOUGHT
Learners who are able to self-manage and engage in learning therefore achieving learning outcomes

As the behaviour of children is assessed, and that assessment is noted in report cards,

schools are obliged to teach it as a subject. Behaviour must be taught if it is to be assessed. A child behaving in unacceptable or inappropriate ways must receive the additional education to ensure an improvement in standards.

How I see the program operating in my school
Hasn't started for the year yet – why not?
Don't see strong evidence across school community
Readily embraced by some teachers and not others – what makes the difference?

Tuning in is an important phase of the mutual aid model, and is also necessary in Play is the Way.
One of the most important steps in the tuning in process when it comes to Play is the Way is the reading of activity or game instructions. This enables for educators to adjust instructions and activities to cater for the age and ability of the target group. For example, during activities that involve writing, it may be necessary and much more enjoyable for younger children to create their responses using drawings.

It is also important that the philosophy of the Play is the Way methodology is revisited, as well as the aims and objectives. The facilitator should remain focused on creating an environment which will enable children to play whilst promoting social and emotional learning. To do this, it would be important to have a sound understanding of the objectives of the activities and to keep these in mind whilst organising and setting up the activities and games for the children.

Before all games and activities commence, a facilitator should be well organised and have in mind what is required for the game to be successful. Throughout the Play is the Way instructional texts there are multiple check lists about the frame of mind a facilitator should be in, the language that they should use, and what materials are needed for different activities. A facilitator should be prepared to allow children to work through the discomfort that may come from any challenging aspects of a game. When help is given, it should be in a way that facilitates further exploration of the challenge, and should not involve giving away any answers, which would negate the empowering framework in place.

A key characteristic of mutual aid group work which can also be found in Play is the Way is the use of a Strengths Based Practice.
During activities children become aware or are presented with examples of right or wrong decisions or behaviours, and are asked to work through these by themselves. As well as being empowering for children, these activities allow for positive behaviours to be reinforced. One of the first tips given to facilitators is that they do not play the games with the children, and rather observe their efforts and behaviour. This allows for the children to be in charge of the learning that happens throughout the games, to act individually, and to problem solve amongst themselves whilst promoting mutual support. Mutual support inturn, promotes empathetic learning.

A child's contribution to the game and the group that they are playing with is an important focus. As the objectives of most of the games require effort and application, the idea of "bettering" rather than winning is constantly reinforced. And rather than being better than others, bettering oneself and working on one's own skills is of more importance, and these efforts can contribute to the success of the group. In line with

mutual aid group work, the games create scenarios whereby each participant's skills and involvement are needed, to work on a common objective.

The social and emotional skills of the children are recognised and utilised during the games, as they are asked to work together to achieve the aims of a game, without the aid of an adult. This helps to encourage children to utilise their own skills to help to achieve goals as a group. Children are able to learn different forms of self-regulation, throughout the games, as they learn to overcome the challenges that they face. Facilitators should be aware that self-regulation will continue to develop throughout a child's life, through to adulthood and that games that support this development will be a significantly positive and empowering experience.

Facilitators must ensure that games are age appropriate.
Play is the Way uses language to facilitate with the understanding of quite complex concepts. The language always remains simple and to the point, so that children are able to easily understand the objectives of a game and how the game should be run. There is a large focus on language in the Play is the Way manual, and facilitators are encouraged to revisit this section whenever they may feel confused or have forgotten any techniques described.

Throughout the manual, different games have a specified age-range, which ensures that facilitators are aware of the general appropriateness of a game for a certain group of children. In any case, the ability of the children would have to be considered by the facilitator. Self-motivation is important in younger children, rather than constant rewards, and if the games are appropriate for their age-group, this can be an achievable learning outcome for each child.

Activities may be altered to allow for younger children to participate in a way that makes the games more accessible to them, for example with less rules, less complex activities and more active or fun alternatives to suit the group and the needs of the children.

Social Action Groups

The Work Phase – Mutual Aid Group Work
(Group Members Ardent, Preety, Tina)

Congruencies/Incongruences and Recommendations
Tina Napier

Hi everyone, I am going to talk a little bit about what worked well and what might need to be considered around a self nominated, school based social action group. I am focussing on the work phase and key characteristics of mutual aid group work. The group purpose was to discuss whether the LGBTI community within the school felt supported by the school, and to put together a plan to raise awareness around harassment and bullying. This plan would begin to be put in motion on IDAHOT – International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. We had a very short time frame so using the principals of Mutual Aid Group Work had its challenges, as did being in a school setting.

During the ''work phase'' of group work, Shulman highlights the role of the facilitator and the importance of being clear about your role.
I wanted the group to revolve around the student's voices, thoughts and opinions, but I was not clearly able to communicate this right from the start. I feel that this important part of the work phase in mutual aid group work was key, and my lack of ability to do this well, led to the first meeting being less than successful. We were joined by a teacher, and my attempts at being a facilitator rather than a 'group leader' were challenged and the group purpose got lost. The result was that some of the students did not want to return. This really highlighted that the mutual aid aspect of group work is vital to students, perhaps particularly in regard to social action.

I put out a few fires and I was able to clarify my role and the group purpose. In the next meeting there were no teachers present, discussion opened up, and their own ideas flowed. The group meetings became a place to talk, express concerns and highlight positives.

Incongruencies
A school setting will often be a challenging place as a teacher's 'natural instinct to lead' is in direct conflict with the role of a facilitator. This must be carefully considered when in a school setting.
Despite the success of the group as a place to connect with like minded people and a place to feel safe and accepted, I found it difficult to keep direction and fulfil our purpose. According to Shulman (pg. 439) 'even though the conversation may not seem directed toward the group's purpose, it is always purposeful'. However, my concern with mutual aid group work is that often a group will only meet a certain number of times or need to achieve something in a certain time frame – with minimal direction, a group or its members may be left with unfinished business once their time together comes to an end.

Change
One of the challenges I faced was my frustration when members of the group seemed disinterested in other members. I tended to hone in on the person contributing, which

Shulman refers to as 'individual' type counselling. The idea behind 'reaching for the group response to the individual' is to have empathy for all members of the group, and to always hold in faith that those who are not listening are perhaps challenged by the conversation rather than disinterested. Discussing gender and sexuality issues was no doubt confronting for some students. The honesty of some of my group members assisted me in realising how important this aspect of the work phase was. I became conscious of my tendency to individualise people, and so to align with the principals of mutual aid group work, I ensured that my empathy went in all directions during group time, and afterward.

Key recommendation to social work students working with action groups in schools?
- Don't be a leader! Students are very conscious that a school setting often allows little room for student voice. To be in a group situation where they are equals with the facilitator is key to success.
- You may need to explain to teachers who are interested in being part of the group about the principals of mutual aid group work.
- Never underestimate a young person's capacity for creating change, but do consider that they have never been given opportunity before, or have thought they were being given opportunity only to discover they were being 'lead' somewhere.

References
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Cultural Group Work and Mutual Aid

Group work is one of the most important tools in social work practice. Mutual aid is one of the most significant tools in group work. By developing mutual aid in a group, the group can achieve something large that the individual group member cannot achieve by themselves. (Steinberg, 2010)

In this report, there will be five students sharing their experiences about the cultural group work they conducted in their group. They will focus on the composition of their group, purpose of their group, and how multiculturalism can develop mutual aid in their groups and enhance their group work outcomes.

Mutual aid forms when during the group activity, people with similar experiences helping each other in a group setting to achieve the purpose of this group work, such as to overcome difficulties in their life.

'As members begin to feel supported by and in the group, they are more likely to share their concerns and experiences and take a chance on becoming involved with each other, and thus accomplish the purpose of the group.' (Gitterman, 2006, p.91)

According to Steinberg's (2010) speech, mutual aid is 'inherently strengths driven' (p.55). People in the group shares their strength, ability and experiences to help each other. They can later make big progress and achieve amazing outcomes for the group. Culture is one of the most powerful strength for every person.

According to Toseland and Rivas (2012), 'Multicultural differences within the group can have an important impact on the development of group culture and the social integration of all members' (p.87). By applying different cultures well in a group, this can help members share their own strengths and abilities, then develop a good mutual aid in the group.

Yue (Candice) Li

A little Chinese boy from year 1 in the school suffered racial discrimination in his class. So the school Wellbeing Coordinator decided to develop a program called Chinese culture program for the class.

I and the Chinese boy ran the program together. I designed the content of each session of the group, and I assisted him with developing each session in his class. There were five sessions in the program. The first session was about how to say one to five in Chinese. The second one was about how to say polite words in Chinese. The third one is about increasing of understanding of Chinese culture. Such as Chinese flag, Chinese population, Chinese festivals and Chinese traditional costumes. Next one was about Chinese food. For example, we taught the whole class to make dumplings. Additionally, use of chopsticks to pick up dumplings. The last one was about Chinese Animals. Such as Panda. The group began at week 1 of Term 4, it run once a week and the time of each session was about 45 minutes. I made a special book for the children each session, and the boy was responsible for presentation to the whole class. After the presentation, we had interesting activities. Such as coloring, role play and origami. Moreover, we had a Chinese Culture Celebration day for the class in the end of the program. The program aims to enrich the child's understanding of culture by sharing Chinese culture with children. Additionally, it aims to promote cultural identity of the Chinese boy, enhance his confidence along with improve wellbeing of him. There are three beneficiaries that involved in the program. First of all, the Chinese boy. He can feel belonging in the school

through presentation of his culture to other children. It has potential to make him feel safe and comfortable at school. Additionally, it lays the foundation for enhancement of his wellbeing. Secondly, the children who take part in the program. It is an effective way for them to enrich their understanding of culture along with improvement of wellbeing. Thirdly, myself. It is a good way for me to build relationship with children so that increasing understanding for the children. The Chinese culture group is a mutual aid group, the children promote understanding of culture though learning and helping each other. We have already talked about mutual help is one of the rules in the group. Only the children support and help each other can they improve the awareness of cultural diversity. Moreover, we had discussion part each session, every student shared their experiences about their culture, it played a vital role in understanding culture diversity. As for me, it supplied me with more opportunities to know them, and the children have more chance to know about me as well. It is a win-win program.

Yin Cheung Lau
Since I have an education background of art, I would like to start my own project which is related to art therapy and work under the KidsMatter framework of Stella Marish Parish School. The project is work both on group and individual. The project is designed to be a 10 week course that can flexibly run over two school terms. The objective is for children to know about the culture in Australia. They might get more time to learn how to express their emotions and understanding themselves by using texture, colour, line and composition. And also teach them some basic skills and knowledge about art.

The duration of a session lasts about 20-30 minutes. It basically focuses onYear4 & 5 students in this moment. Year 4 students meet every Monday and Wednesday after recess. And Year 5 students meet every Monday and Tuesday early morning or straight after lunch that is depend on school activities.

Art therapy consists of 10 structured sessions. Creative expression through art can provide individuals with a safe outlet for expressing painful feelings that have been at the heart of ongoing problems. (Pearson & Wilson, 2009, p.205). I am working with the Aboriginal worker on Monday after my own project sessions. It is basically focus on the students who have Aboriginal background and teach them some learning skills. Actually, they Aboriginal students had already in third generation. Therefore, they are looking really similar with the others. I used the Aboriginal art to become a tool and try to understand how they feel about Aboriginal history and background. It also try to get the idea of their own sense of belongings.
I am also working with a refugee student at this moment. I am using the color stuff to let him chose the color to represent himself and his family. It can able to get more understanding of his culture background and what kind of issues he is facing in his daily lifestyle.

Xianying (Shannan) Qian
This is a continuous activity, I am conducting this group work every week at lunch time. Usually, I will hold this group work in the court yard of Rosary school. The activity is easy, fun and engaging. It is open to everyone who wants to join in and we will do the paper folding activity together in the court yard. One student came with her friend and the other students would just keep coming. In the activity, I will show them how to make these origami work and we will make them together. I will only give students some help when they cannot follow my moves because they are too complicated.

The purpose of this group work is to engage more with different students and teachers and build a closer relationship with them. This can later help me to conduct my individual and group works more effectively.

In addition, this Origami activity can provide some students a welcomed, safe and secure place to be at lunch time. Especially for those students who don't have friends to play with, who don't like to run around and would like to sit in a corner for a rest or students who are new to the school environment, such as the reception kids, the new migrated or new transferred students. They can build mutual aid with other students in my Origami group and make friends in this group activity. Also, the Origami activity can teach students a new skill that may be a skill for them in the future. As cited by Rich (2014), according to Hagit Shalev, 'In this learning by doing activity, there is a continuous interaction of the action and thought process…Origami is a method of active research…which encourage the advancement of new ideas."

During the group work, I am sharing my strength and ability in paper folding and art with other students. Those who always come to join the origami group and are a quick learner with good art strength can also share their strengths in learning ability and art ability with their friends. For example, when I teach them how to make a cat or a dog, some students are very good at following my moves and can make very good dogs or cats. These students can help their friends who are not so good at folding. They are also very creative and can make something by themselves. Due to Steinberg (2010), mutual aid can be developed in a group when this group is a strength-based group. They will also develop their confidence, which later will improve their mutual aid ability. 'Mistakes are forgivable as paper can be unfolded and refolded.' (Rich, 2014) Completing a project creates a sense of confidence, accomplishment and satisfaction.

This sense of mutual aid between students can not only improve the effectiveness of my Origami group work during the lunch time, but also later help students to have a happier school time, especially during recess and lunch time. Students who build mutual aid with each other can have a good friendship, no longer be isolated from the majority group and then can experience a friendly school environment.

'The mutual aid practitioner enjoys sharing.' (Steinberg, 2010, p.61) My Origami group work is all about sharing, sharing my culture, strength and ability about paper folding. For students, they're also sharing their ideas, imagination and learning skills to each other. After they learn the joy of sharing, they can also improve their socialization in school, and improve their social and emotional skills.

Hongyang Zhou (Ed)
Culture diversity in Alberton Primary was multiple presented and in this public primary school which located in Port Adelaide area, students and education stuffs proudly holding their diversity and stay together as a cohesive community.
The things I would like to emphasize during the placement is an activity that ran by myself. The activity was about Chinese hand writing art which not only inked with me originate culture, but also a combinational art form of both writing and drawing. Because I noticed in the outset that Alberton Primary acknowledges diversity between students and staffs, students have enough time and activities stay together, sharing ideas and interests. However, the concept of different culture group was gained insufficiently, and another purpose of this project was also related to my social work with group practice.

So, I started this project and put my focus on those students who has different culture background within this school, these students including whose parents or one parent from another country, which were mostly Asian countries, they recognize their identity as Australian, but the diversity on these students were found, such as their religions, different appearance, besides, ideas and new knowledge inspired my enthusiasm on teaching these students Chinese words and hand writing.

The project run outs during 6 times in 1 school term, participants including 3 boys from year 4 and 2 girls from year 5, each lesson occupied 45 minutes during their discovery class. And the positive highlights were all of them felt keen to experience new activities, and especially for those feel reluctance to use writing to express their needs and feelings, because through learning and using different language's expressing approach, their passion on leaning was definitely enriched.

Having this project during the engagement with developing children and particularly associates with culture diversity was absolute helping in my social work practice. It provided great opportunities for refining my group work skills and many other professional engagement knowledges.

S.Visalakshi(Appu) —

In St Teresa's school as a part of exchanging and spreading awareness on my culture, I started taking class on Hinduism for the year 1's when the teacher was telling that she was planning to take a lesson on Hinduism, I offered to help her and the children were very happy and excited with the session and enjoyed every bit of it, following which I gave them some things (Bindi's) which Hindu women wear on their forehead, and they were excited to have them and were eagerly showing it to their parents with lot of enthusiasm. Following this session, the teacher was also impressed by my work and recommended me to another teacher who approached me for doing the same with another class which I was pleased to do and could see lot of excitement in the faces of these kids and were keen to learn about the culture and asked intelligent questions about the goddesses in Hinduism. The teacher also bought a picture of the goddess (Lakshmi) and placed it in the class room and asked my suggestions on what can be improved and how it looked. The children were also excited and began coming to share with me about the new goddess in their classroom and invited me to have a look at it. In this way, there were relating Hinduism with Christianity and learnt a lot.

Apart from sharing religion, I also took some sarees (traditional Indian outfit) to show to the kids and they loved it and were keen in asking questions about the Indian culture, which was a win-win situation, since I showed and explained my culture to them, at the same time also learnt a lot from the young kids about their culture and lifestyle, which has been a great experience in placement

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DrumBeat Program

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An Introduction to DRUMBEAT
The Holyoake Institute is one of Australia's leading Drug and Alcohol treatment service providers. This program focuses strongly on reducing social isolation by increasing the social skills and the self-efficacy of people in order to let them better engage with the social world around them.

This program is run also at schools throughout Australia as well as youth centers. Holyake's DRUMBEAT program was originally developed specifically to meet people's needs which utilize both social learning theory and cognitive behavioral therapy. This special program gains some social learning outcomes including improved emotional regulation, increased self-esteem, and improved social skills, that lead to better relationships and an increased sense of belonging.

The DRUMBEAT program has been developed over a number of years and has shown its beneficial effects on a range of social measures, including classroom cooperation, teacher-student relationships, emotional control and self-esteem. Moreover, it has also been successful in increasing school attendance and has been used as part of school retention policies. Although this program is developed with youth in mind, the program has also been delivered to adult groups that suffer similar social alienation with positive results. These groups include prisoners, mental health patients, and drug and alcohol misusers.

DRUMBEAT is now used by professionals in many different countries and working in a wide range of areas with diverse population. The common link to each of the individuals participating in the program is the critical importance of relationships in their lives.

History of Drumbeat Program
Drumbeat was founded in 1975, Holyoake owes its origin to a small group of passionate people who were concerned about the lack of help available in Western Australia for individuals with problems related primarily to alcohol and drug use but particularly the significant lack of assistance for families. Through the efforts of these people, not only the organization, but also the spirit and heart of Holyoake was born.

Holyoake grew very quickly and became highly respected for its work with adult problem drinkers and with spouses, partners, and parents. Holyoake uses a client centered, interpersonal process approach with emotional and cognitive behavioral therapies. Holyoake now offers a wide range of programs to help people who are affected directly or indirectly by substance misuse. Men, women, partners, parents, young adults, adolescents, teenagers, and children experience the benefits of these programs. In addition, Holyoake reaches out to adults in prisons and juveniles in detention. Holyoake also manages some drug community services team.

In 2003, Holyoake launched DRUMBEAT as an early intervention program to reduce levels of alienation for 'at risk' youth. Since then, the program has gone from strength to strength, and is now facilitated across Australia to people of all ages and circumstances. It is now an evidence-based program backed by several independent research studies.

The DRUMBEAT program utilises 5 core elements to achieve its goal.
1. Core Rhythms – Participants learn to play specific parts in harmony with each other leading to increased levels of focus and concentration as well as team work skills.
2. Rhythm Games – These promote fun and engagement and are often tied to analogies that prompt discussion on a social theme
3. Discussion – Opportunities to talk about the social themes of the program sessions from a personal perspective, increasing the relevance of the program to participant's lives and leading to personal insight and personal growth.
4. Improvisation – Participants are encouraged to explore their own creativity and develop their own rhythms. This promotes self- efficacy and supports creative ways of problem solving.
5. Performance – This provides recognition of achievement, connection to community & demonstrates the potential of each individual

Aims of drumbeat in a school
- To increase resilience of the child.
- To improve interpersonal skills.
- To improve problem solving skills.
- To increase emotional regulation.
- To increase self-awareness and self-esteem.
- To reduce tension, anxiety and stress.
- To reduce anti-social behavior.
- To improve relationships with peers and teachers.
- To increase school attendance.

Objectives of drumbeat programme-
- Increased collaboration and cohesiveness in group activities through the encouragement of teamwork and cooperation.
- Increased musicality in attributes such as rhythm maintenance, expressiveness, confidence in performance and self-discipline in rehearsal.
- Improved understanding of the range of human emotions and their expression in ways that enhance relationships.
- Increased awareness of the diversity of human experience and tolerance of difference.
- Increased levels of community connections (belonging) from the rewards of group membership.
- Improved self-esteem through skill attainment and recognition gained from live musical performance.
- Increased responsibility for the self – management of behaviour.
- Improved social skills of listening, problem solving, sharing and empathy.
- Recognition of the need for boundaries as part of effective group process and trusting relationships.

- Increased levels of commitment and perseverance towards both and individual tasks.
- Increased recognition of the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Provision of an acceptable means of self- expression.
- Improved level of emotional regulation.
- Reduced levels of anxiety and psychological distress.

Work phase:
Format:
Closed-group format: This type of program is mainly designed for fixed clients for a period of 10 weeks where 1 hour lessons are provided each week. It is designed for small groups (6-10). The age is recommended to be similar. The aim is for the program is to finish with a performance given at school community or other community event.
Open-group format: It mainly aims to increase students' attendance in school. This program incorporates 12 themed sessions and includes additional lessons on communication, community, anger and frustration and self-belief. The drumming exercise has been simplified to allow access to the participants who join the group at any stage. The performance element is incorporated into the general program.
Complex needs format: This version of the program was developed for young people with development delays and sensory perception issues and is used in special education, child trauma and child and adolescent mental health services. It includes 10 sessions with and increased emphasis on emotional regulation, grounding and social skills development. This format includes specific exercises that address both motor coordination & sensory perception issues, such as gaze aversion and sound localization.

However, our school uses the mixture of these formats. This session is provided once a week with maximum of 6 students from year 4 and 5. New participants are also allowed to join this group. This lesson is provided to the students as a reward for good behavior and learning in school. Each session is held for 30 minutes. It takes place in music room where, students are instructed to sit in a circle so that everyone can see each other.

The sessions of drumbeat consist of the 3 patterns of rhythm: Base (B), Tone (T), and Slap (S). we also use Clap(C) and Scratch (S) as additional pattern of rhythm.

Session1: Introduction (Rhythm of life)
Rhythms and patterns impact on our behavior. Also, rhythms and patterns influence on relationship to the world around us and people we interact with. Trust plays a crucial role in healthy relationship (Holyoake, 2015).
In the beginning, rules are explained to the students so that, they show mutual respect to everyone present, show respect for drum and do not drum while the instructor is talking. Now, the drumbeat session starts with making an introduction about the main rhythms by making the students aware of the bass note by touching the pulse. Students are than taught about heartbeat rhythm which connects everyone with each other. Students are also asked to play the drum, by imagining their heartbeat would sound in different scenario like stressful or peaceful moment. At the end the students are asked about their feelings while drumming.

Session2: Relationship

Relationships are variable in nature, always fluid. Therefore, everyone need to care about others and pay attention to others rhythm during playing drum. Students try to be open and honest to have healthy relationships. Students can understand that respecting other is fundamental to have healthy relationship with peers through playing drum in a group. Different activities are run which help the students to understand how closely they are related with others. One example of it is the activity called drum as 'I dance'. In this exercise visual connection in emphasized. If people drum with their heads down, they lose connection to the group and will soon go out of time. In order to keep the rhythm connected, it is required to keep our heads up and watch each other. Some other activities include,

● Rumble if…
● The eye contact rumble

Session3: Emotions and Feelings

Feelings which students have is important to insight their relationships with others. They can be aware of their feelings while they play drum in a group. Playing a drum give students implication the way to insight own feelings and to cooperate with others. Students can learn importance and appropriate way of expression about their feelings and possible hazards that emotion and feelings can interpret negatively and suppression of feelings can harm themselves. There are different exercises, which helps to identify feelings and emotions. One such example is the exercise named name some feelings, show some feelings, play some feelings that focus on 'interpretation of feeling', which have 3 steps:

1. Give one student the name of emotions (with emotional cards) to make face expression
2. The student who sit down the opposite side play the drum to express the impression
    about other's face expression.
3. Asking the original person about their feelings about friend's expression

Session4: Teamwork

Teamwork is fundamental tip for our lives. Students are required to understand to work with people who are not familiar with them sometimes. Good relationship involves teamwork. Healthy relationship is necessary to use concentration, perseverance and commitment. Self-belief is critical to realize our own potential. In this session, different activities are hold that elucidate the importance of teamwork. One such activity is "Holding Time". Holding a simple rhythm for set periods of time without speeding up or slowing down for 2 mins, then 5 mins and finally 7 mins. It takes two Practice concentration:

1. practice 2 patterns of rhythm patters
2. divide 2 groups and give a rhythm pattern for each group
3. play 2 groups at the same time
4. have a pausing time when the facilitator plays a particular rhythm

Session 5: Getting ready for the performance

In the last session, students are mainly prepared for the final performance in the assembly. In this session, all the rhythms are put together. That is, the group decides on a format that combines the different rhythms together into a performance. First the students decide which rhythms the group feels comfortable playing. Each person needs

to be given input into this process and it serves as an introduction to conversations about effective decision making. The aim is to obtain consensus and involve each member of the group in the decision. The whole performance s about the students as a team, that is, how well they work and support each other rather than an individual. The performance shows us what we can achieve when we work with others cooperatively.

Characteristics of Mutual Aid

According to Steinberg (2004), mutual aid refers to different kinds of help that people offer to each other or experience with one another and it is innately strengths driven. Only those who focus on their strength could identify the things they long for and have a go with it. Then they could help either themselves or others. While a group which only draw on deficits would never catalysed mutual aid. Another important feature of mutual aid is that practitioner should enjoy sharing. Those who need to be willing to give up many of the inherent benefits of professional power like being the centre of attention, being held in high esteem and wide-reaching authority can get joy from mutual-aid process. Secondly, a mutual-aid practitioner should be a person of faith. Faith means a way which relates assumption that people can always make achievement if given the chance and may be a little help. Thirdly, mutual-aid practitioner should be a person of courage. The person need to have the courage to accept and stay in the mess and chaos of mutual aid. This is closely related to drumbeat program, allowing children to create their rhythm which may cause mess and chaos in the beginning of the program. However, practitioner should have courage and believe this is the path which lead to the outcome of mutual-aid.

Drumbeat program could especially help children and young people who have difficulties through talk based methods. Although they are not very good at traditional way of communication, drums could help them to express their own emotions, even through listening to other's rhythms and cooperation with the whole group, their social skills could be developed and it is also a good way to enhance their resilience. By practicing drumbeat, children and young people's confidence could be enhanced, their strength will be strengthened.

LGBTIQ Groups

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexed, and queer/questioning (LGBTIQ) people, known as sexual minorities, are about 10% of the population (AFSC Gay, 1991). Shockingly, in every classroom of 30, there are maybe 9 students are influenced by sexual minority problems, such as being a gay or having gay friends. (AFSC Gay, 1991). There is apparent inequality in the many institutions of society, such as law, government and education. High schools are seriously affected by homophobia. It is not only because high school culture not tolerates sexual minorities, it also because the complicit among intolerance, violence against LGBTIQ people, even murder happens (Savage& Harley, 2009). According to The Australian (2016), Keysar, the president of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, runs six schools across the Australia. He believed that sex should only be between man and woman. Also, he even claimed that he has never seen a child who was gay in Islamic schools.

In Australia, a report in 2014 showed that nearly one in ten of LGBTIQ young people were forced to change schools because of the bullying targeted at them (Aaron,2014). Researchers of University of Western Sydney has done a report about growing up Queer, they found that 18% of LGBTIQ young people said they were physical abused because of their sexuality, while 66% experienced verbally abused (Aaron,2014). The report demonstrated that 16% of LGBTIQ young people had tried to suicide, 33% had harmed themselves due to bullying, and 42% of them had attempted either suicide or self-harm. (Aaron, 2014).

Because of these reasons, a lot of schools set up LGBTIQ groups for their LGBTIQ students. Different groups have different aims and they might have different activities, such as board games, crafts or just chatting. Some schools may even have outdoors activities. However, they all have same aims as well. They provide comfortable and safe places for LGBTIQ students who feel isolated, they can meet new friends in the groups. They also empower LGBTIQ students to advocate for their equal and safe school environment. They can offer a better awareness for other students of equality and empathy as well.

Pride Club is one of the groups to support LGBTIQ students in Thebarton Senior College. It has been running one of the youth workers about for 2 years. Usually about between five and seven students participate in the group, and youth worker and some of teachers facilitate the meeting. The purposes of the group are information sharing, socialising, empowerment and providing safe place. There are no particular topics and activities running during the session, but students chat whatever they want. Sometimes special events are set up such as purple day and Halloween party to raise awareness of LGBTIQ issues. In addition, youth workers and teachers inform participants about information related to LGBTIQ, and encourage to participating off-site events such as pride march, protest against same sex marriage plebiscite and formal for LGBTIQ.

Through those events, students have some opportunities to draw on their strengths. For instance, one student painted poster for the event on purple day, another member baked cupcakes for others in Halloween party and a third student decollate a classroom for the party. In terms of Mutual-Aid, strengthen-driven is one of the best practices for working

in a group. Steinberg explains that strengths-driven process is important method for Mutual-Aid, which is any kind of experiences can be strengths to support people in a group although the experience do not seem like advantages (Steinberg, 2010). In Pride Club, one student is good at hand-making, another student likes to chat and always brings interesting topics for chat, a third student is very quiet but she always makes important points, thus everybody has different skills and strengths.

When I look at the members of Pride Club, they are facing many difficulties. For most of members issues are not only LGBTIQ things, but also mental health, Autism, Asperger disorder and bullying experience. Those complex issues marginalise them from the mainstream in society. Anti-oppression is another concept of Mutual-Aid (Steinberg, 2010). Oppressions for Pride Club members would be discrimination and prejudice against sexual identities and disabilities in society. To combat those oppressions, Pride Club provides some opportunities which members can feel belongingness and safe, and empower students through event, raising awareness about the issues for other students.

The Pride Club in Thebarton Senior College plays a great role for LGBTIQ students. The environment, which respect each other, do not judge others and do not push ourselves, gives group members feeling of welcomed and safe. This belongingness is the most important things for the Pride Club.

There are some important elements of the Pride Club to adapt when organize a similar group work for LGBTQI issue in other schools.

Strength-driven approach:
Therefore, there can be some activates in the group which providing opportunities to members to work on their strengths, so that they can provide helps to other. Because it can help the members to feel more positive about themselves when providing helps to others and feel more belonging to the groups.

Empowerment
Another important value of social group work is to provide opportunities to group members to provide helps or received support from others. So it is also important for the workers to empowers the members to feel positive about accept helps and supports from others in the group (Garrett, P.76, 2004).

Safe Place
It is also important that to make the members feel that the groups is a safe place to share their problems and difficulties. Workers have to make sure that there is no pre judgment of every member and each member is respect to others. This can make the members feeling welcomed and learning that they are not alone of facing the difficulties in their life. In order to make the members feel more comfortable to share themselves, it is important for the workers to remind the group members to respect the privacy of others as well that each member should not to share the others stories without their permission outside the group.

Suggestion of improvement
As mentioned before, the Pride Club in Thebarton Senior College do not have any particular topic or activities at most of the time, but the group can be improved by organizing more particular topic or activities. Especially for the early state of the

starting up the group in other school, particular activities can help members to get know of others more quickly. Moreover, particular activates can also help to encourage isolated or silent members are feel more comfortable of participating in activates than talking with others (Garrett, P.76, 2004).

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Parent's Afternoon Tea

By Imogen Stefan-Rasmus, Xiaoli Chen and Xueyan Wang

A parent's morning/afternoon tea is an informal group where parents and caregivers from the school community are invited to share food and discuss the matters of the school. The purpose of the group can vary from school to school as the needs of the community will differ. The parent's afternoon tea discussed in this paper was brought about by a desire to improve parent engagement within the school community. This aim can be achieved by providing a forum for parent's to raise comments and concerns about their children and the school, involving parent's in school events and for the school to deliver key resources and information. The workers role during these meetings is to facilitate communication between the parents and the school, facilitate communication between parents as necessary, help problem solve concerns, arrange for guest speakers and provide information for parents.

According to Steinberg (2010), there are 3 phases in mutual aid process in general and all of the 3 stages emphasises the development of interpersonal relationships. Stage 1 is develop collaborative supportive and trustworthy relationships. Stage 2 is identify and use existing strength and/or to develop new ones and stage 3 is work together toward individual and/or collective psychosocial goals, which reflects the very essence of social work with groups (Steinberg, 2010).

Steinberg (2010) identifies several characteristics of mutual aid group work. Mutual aid is inherently strength driven. Mutual aid acknowledges strength both in individuals and groups and aims to help people to identify and improve their strengths. Mutual aid practice can be defined as inherently holistic, which indicates an approach to helping that integrates the whole of recipient. Mutual aid can be seen as inherently psychosocial process in order to identify needs and goals to shape interventions in from micro to macro level. Dual-focus is demanded as practitioners need to both balance group and individual needs. Mutual aid works well with anti-oppression theory as it is strength-based and sees anti-oppression as an essential and natural focus. Mutual aid can be taken as evidence to measure the effectiveness of practice as it focuses on group members' needs.

During the work phase the mutual aid worker needs to decide on what program or activities will be used and be able to articulate its benefits and weaknesses. Specifically for the parents afternoon tea information sheets or flyers may need to be prepared, any other relevant resources need to be sourced and should a guest speaker be involved they need to be greeted and prepared before the start of the group. The workers involved in the parent's afternoon tea understand the purpose of the group and are able to communicate that to the group members. They are also able to prepare effectively for meetings.

Steinberg (2010) identifies four qualities of the mutual aid worker: they enjoy sharing and do not take a position of power, they are a person of faith who believes the best in people, they are courageous and can face unpredictability, chaos and taboo topics and they are inherently curious about their work, their research and the world around them. Within the parent's afternoon tea there are multiple workers which means it is difficult to present a cohesive mutual aid worker persona to the group. However, the individual

workers do possess the qualities Steinberg identifies in varying degrees.

Our parent afternoon tea is being held fortnightly, and has reached a number of good outcomes. The first outcome is that these meetings offer an opportunity for parents to help each other by seeking out and drawing on their own strengths. Before we started organizing the parent afternoon tea, we were fully aware that some parents of children in this school lived a very tough life, with such issues as low socio economic status, family breakdown, and alcohol use related problems. However, the organization of this event showed that they also had their own strengths that they could offer to help each other. They had some similar experiences, such as parenting doubts as well as successful methods. The most common thing they had was their love and care for their children, and wishing that their children could behave well and be in a beneficial environment at school. One of the parents shared her experience of volunteering in the school regularly in order to make a little contribution.

Therefore, the strength-driven nature of our parent afternoon tea contributes to the mutual aid process of this group work. Next, based on the idea of anti-oppression these meetings enable parents to make their voice heard and reduce the workers' tendencies to oppress to the greatest extent. Before the first meeting, we did some preparation by collecting some information we thought possibly useful and interested by them. In the meeting with these parents we listened carefully to the parents' own needs, some of which we had not anticipated. For example, parents mentioned the experience of their children being culturally discriminated by other children in the school and asked for culturally inclusive education. Other needs mentioned included programs for stranger danger, after-school soccer, overcoming shyness and some common issues like building and maintaining friendships, anti-bulling and parenting at home for getting homework done. Therefore, in our parent's afternoon tea, the workers' assumptions about parents' needs were vigilantly made and parents' capacity to know their own needs were acknowledged.

Thirdly, the evidence-based approach in our parent afternoon tea made it more effective and successful. Steinberg (2010, p.60) indicates that evidence derives from feedback. In our practice, we encouraged parents to give feedback to the work we had done, which enabled us to organize the event more appropriately to meet parents' needs. For example, during the first meeting we asked parents whether the time we set for the meeting was suitable for them, whether the information of the meeting was accessible in timely and appropriate ways and so on. Unexpectedly, for some reason they did not receive our flyer for the meeting in time and therefore got to know the occurrence of this event at a very short notice. This feedback enabled us to make adjustments next time for disseminating information, which will then help us engage more parents.

A key recommendation for social work students to organize parent afternoon tea is, in our opinion, to keep curious and be an evidence-based worker. Steinberg (2010, p.64) suggests that curiosity and research can make the group work more efficient. For social work students, it is important to be willing to find out parents' real needs instead of only believing in one's own assumptions. It is also important for them to follow up with research after meeting with parents each time to support their suggestions and needs. The process of problem formulation, data collection, explicit evidence, interpretation and dissemination suggested by Steinberg (2010, p.64) are what social work students need to take seriously so that parents' needs could be met appropriately and they would

be more willing to engage in the future.

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Restorative Practices- Mutual Aid Group

Restorative Practices (RP) is based on philosophical foundations and relies on a relationship-based, dialogic framework. RP begins as a 'response to specific, harmful student behaviour and attempts to grow into an approach that engages all students in an environment that encourages respectful, caring interaction' (Vaandering, 2014, p.66). In schools, RP is most often delivered in the form of circle time. If the purpose of RP is to restore relationships harmed by wrongdoing, then the role of circle time is to help build the relationships children consider worth restoring (Hansberry & Langley, 2015). Circle time is a practical way that allows children to develop skills of understanding, tune into feelings, share opinions and begin to see the world from another's perspective, which are crucial in any social setting (Hansberry & Langley, 2015). Circle time is a positive, strengths-based pedagogy focused on the building of a sense of belonging for all students (Hansberry & Langley, 2015). This report will discuss the group formation and duration, the tuning in stage of mutual aid, the psychosocial characteristics, congruency with social work and recommendations for practice.

Group Formation and Duration

Groups should be consisting of any members who want to be present at the restorative meetings as it is important for social inclusion. In the case of schools however, the voluntary status of children is questioned as in some situations they may not have a choice if it is a classroom circle time. Groups can consist of students who are friends, are experiencing issues with each other, having issues with the school, or even with factors external to the school. If the RP group is about a certain issue, everyone who is relevant to the issue should be present so that they can all share and overcome their issues. As each session progresses the members in the group will form a tighter bond and become more open and comfortable which will allow the students to be more willing to share new thoughts and feelings.

It is also useful to schedule a certain time for restorative practices to be run with the students so that they can be mentally prepared and have time to think of any issues they wish to discuss. Due to the emotional intensity of the sessions, the students can become very distressed during the sessions and require further support. It is also important to make sure that the group return back to a happy psychological state of mind before they leave so that they are not returning to class in a state of mind that effects their learning. Duration for circle time can vary depending on the issues being discussed and the time allocate within the classroom. The ideal required time taken to make the practice effective is two continuous lesson sessions, however in some situations this may not be the case and some teachers may run circle time for 20 minutes.

Tuning in

The application of a restorative justice practice with primary aged school students can be an effective means to invite students with the opportunity of ongoing support. To be an effective session, clear boundaries need to be explained and followed, which are established in the tuning in stage. To prepare for the circle time it is useful for the facilitator/school counsellor to observe the children in classrooms and in the yard, speak with the teacher, be aware of any ongoing or important issues, background of children and any diagnoses. All these will contribution to the purpose and intention of the group. Practicalities for the tuning in stage require having paper, a token, tissues, pencils and chairs or cushions depending on what the group will be sitting on. The location is also important, hence the classroom would be the ideal space as children are

familiar with it and feel comfortable.

The session requires all students and the facilitator to be sitting in a circle (either on the ground or on chairs) as equals, which eliminates any components of power differentiation. This is best run by the school counsellor as this is the best person to follow up any matters of high concern and then offer support in the form of a mutual aid group. The setting is created by stating the reason for having the circle time and needs to include stating that; "some people are not being responsible with their behaviours and respecting the rights for other people to learn, and to feel safe." State also something like; "This is a time where we can safely talk about the harm that has been done by others with their choices of behaviours. We are doing this so we can understand who has been affected by such behaviours and in what ways it has affected them."

Rules to make this time be safe and helpful are stated at the beginning of the session:

- Everyone will have an opportunity to talk about how to make things better.
- The people who have been harmed will be given the opportunity to talk about how they have been affected.
- There will be no blaming during this time and there will be no punishment and no one will be in trouble for what they say.
- There are some important rules so that everyone will feel safe and respected during this time.
- What is said by yourself or anyone else stays in the room.
- One person speaks at a time, and the person with the speaking token only can talk.
- You may pass the token if you do not want to say anything.
- No names are to be mentioned, only what happened to you and how you felt and how it has affected you.
- At the beginning of the circle time session, students are given a piece of paper to write down:
- What has been done to you (verbal, physical harassment, name calling, put downs, being disrupted when working etc.)
- What has been done to others in our class (things you have seen happen to others that you don't agree with or like).
- All the papers will remain anonymous are collected by the facilitator and carefully read out to initiate conversation. This also allows the facilitator to filter out any inappropriate comments. This then is followed up with the speaking token being passed around and thoughts and ideas being shared. Ideally, the session is run by the children, however the facilitator provides equity and may need assist at times with student's expression. The tuning in and preparation stage is crucial in how the session flows to reach its objective.

Psychosocial characteristics

The psychosocial characteristics of mutual aid consist of how a groups social and cultural environment influence an individual's mind or behaviour and the interrelation of these behavioural and social factors. In mutual aid, the psychosocial characteristics consist of how group members must maintain a dual purpose, keeping one eye on the individuals of the group and the other on the group as a whole, and how each member's skills and strengths affect the individual and groups purpose.

In order for a group to identify the goals, needs and which intervention to implement,

they must first learn how to focus on both the psycho and social aspects of the helping process taking place in RP and always keep these in view together (Steinberg, 2010). Members of the restorative group should keep an even dual focus on both the psychological and personal elements whilst also integrating the social/interpersonal goals and needs of the group. Through doing this, the group can learn to integrate the social aspects of the group whist also being in constant reflection of what each individual member is contributing as well.

The other type of dual focus that RP groups partake in is keeping one eye on each individual of the group and one on the group as a whole. This can be achieved through keeping focus on both individual members of the group whilst also keeping track of the group as a system. An example of this would be taking notice of what role each group member plays and keeping track of the group running effectively as a whole. Another dual focus could be focusing on the group whilst focusing on the groups system that is taking place. An example of this would be keeping track of the group's goal whilst also looking at the systematic structure of the group. There could also be a dual focus on the groups purpose as a whole, whilst individual members could also be working towards their own individual goals. Groups can keep one eye on facilitating self-help and the other on catalysing exchange of strengths. Finally, a group could also keep an eye on the explicit personal and the interpersonal whilst also focusing on the latent personal and interpersonal.

Strengths in social work refer to anything from the ability to stay alive during chaos, a psychological insight, social abilities, the individual capacity of comfort in their own skin, a person's ability to build successful relationships, or whatever keeps someone going (Steinberg, 2010). A strength could also refer to an individual's skills, talents, knowledge, insights, and the wisdom they have gathered throughout their life. Through group members understanding both their own strengths as well as the strengths of other members, allows them to help each other work towards individual or collective psychosocial goals. In order for a group member to be able to help themselves, they must first recognise their own skills, then the strengths of every other group member. A group without strengths cannot assemble mutual aid.

The psychosocial characteristic of RP aims for each group member to seek out and harness information from group members whilst contributing themselves. Each group member must be emotionally engaged in the helping process whether it is towards one self or centred towards another group member, which builds on an individual's emotional intelligence. Individuals in the group develop their ability to not only help themselves but also to help others. Becoming aware of individual behaviours and actions may either be destructive or have the capacity to be modified to create meaningful relationships and enhance one's social network. Mutual aid is formulated with each member's psychosocial whole in mind and not just their needy or problematic parts. If they are not fully engaged, they will not be contributing their strengths which are needed. Through group members looking at the psychosocial characteristic of mutual aid, they must realise that in order to empower others they must be willing to share their strengths with the group and let others use theirs with a shared responsibility.

Congruency with Social Work
In many cases RP is congruent with the social work discipline as it focuses on the social

and emotional wellbeing of both the individual and the group by concentrating on repairing harm and developing positive relationships. The focus on connections and relationships aligns with social work as it is based on human connection and is essential for effective communication. A close link between RP and the social work profession is the value of social justice (AASW, 2010), as it aims to be fair to all individuals involved. RP also allows for further skill development in areas that fit with social work practice such as communication, listening, empathy, cooperation, conflict management and problem solving. The argument is that if RP is implemented and embedded well, the process is not punitive and should not be misunderstood as a form of punishment in schools.

Despite the theoretical and ideal understanding and implementation of RP in schools, it may still fall into a form of discipline and punishment if it is continuously only used when for behavioural management or as children would see it when they have done something 'bad'. This produces an incongruence with social work, as the values of social work; respect for persons, social justice and professional integrity (AASW, 2010), may differ from teacher's values. The distinction between the role and purpose of each profession becomes evident and more important as a social worker in a school would be focused on wellbeing as a pre-requisite for learning, and the teachers most often having an educational and academic agenda. Therefore, the conflict of incongruence of social work and RP in schools may be dependent on which profession is facilitating the group and what their agenda is, which ideally would be a social worker which allows for the congruency.

Recommendations

The theory of RP may present differently when put into practice, especially in schools as there can be different variables and despite teaching being the main profession, other professions contribute to a multidisciplinary team working in this system with different roles. Listed below are recommendation of practical recommendations of implementing RP in the form of circle time in primary schools.

An example of a variable may be the individual who is assisting facilitating the RP group or circle time. In an ideal world, this would be the school counsellor (who could be a social worker) who is experienced in this field and very familiar with the process, and differentiates from the disciplinary and authoritative label teachers are often given. However, in schools with the main profession being school teachers, RP most often occurs in the classroom when the teacher believes it to be appropriate and useful. The issue becomes the variation in the experience and knowledge of the teacher in regards to RP. In some instances, the teacher will be very familiar with the process and run the group in class the same way the school counsellor would, which would be most beneficial and ideal. However, in other cases the teacher may not be very experienced or familiar with RP and either fail to implement it in the classroom or facilitate with errors or without maintaining main principles and forming group rules. In this case, the recommendation would be for the school counsellor to model this in the classroom over a period of time and essentially upskill the teacher in the process. This would be time-consuming as there is often only one school counsellor; however, the long term benefits would outweigh the short term effort and most importantly help the children learn the process and develop their wellbeing.

Another variable may be the suitability to every student, due to the diversity of

individuals present in a school system. This may mean that RP may not be as beneficial or effective for individuals with learning or behavioural challenges. An example of this may be an individual on the Autism Spectrum who has difficulties with social interactions and skills such as communication would could cause tension, conflict or frustration within the group. The facilitator of the group would need to be mindful of any cultural diversity, physical diversity, religious considerations and trauma diversity, especially if they are likely to impact on the RP group. Additionally, the child is at the centre of social workers in schools however in reality they are part of a wider system which includes parents and families. This may present as challenging at times, and in regards to RP parents may require justification and explanation as to why their child is participating in the group and what the benefits are. The recommendation would be parent information nights and maintaining a healthy relationship with the parents with effective and regular communication.

Another recommendation would be that RP and circle time may often be a springboard for further work, which may involve the creation of mutual aid groups or further sessions with the school counsellor due to deeper issues. This is due to circle time creating a space that children associate with honesty, fairness and equality and often feel comfortable expressing concerns and personal issues. If the same issue is brought up by several students, this produces opportunities for potential mutual aid groups to form and meet regularly. In schools these may involve groups such as book club, sporting groups, play groups, lunch time groups, groups based on friendships and other extra-curricular groups such as choir. Additionally, children disclosing important information in circle time may require further follow up with the school counsellor/social worker. This is important if the issues are severe, as the child may not have sought help if it weren't for the conversation in circle time, which acts as a form of referral process for further 1-1 sessions.

The report explained how RP works in schools in the form of circle time and how this aligns with the mutual aid group theory. It shows that a well implemented RP framework in schools can produce many benefits to students wellbeing and therefore learning. Building up and identifying their own emotional experiences particularly when feeling hurt and sad, and being aware that their own agency can hurt others. Having an opportunity to explore these interactions builds capacity to communicate at an emotional level and improves their sensitivity to become more empathic towards their friends and family members and the community they live in.

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- Further reading
- Free resources available:
- http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/RP%20Curriculum%20and%20Scripts%20and%20PowePoints/Classroom%20Curriculum/Teaching%20Restorative%20Practices%20in%20the%20Classroom%207

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- http://www.hansberryec.com.au/uploads/docs/files/grab_and_go_circle_time_intro.pdf
- http://www.behaviourmatters.org.au/Resources.php
- http://www.varj.asn.au/Resources/Documents/Int%20Conference%202013%20papers/Making%20Restorative%20Practice%20Explicit%20David%20Vinegrad.pdf
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WHAT'S THE BUZZ

GROUP MEMBERS: ALI, AMANDA, ARRIS

WHAT'S THE BUZZ- INTRODUCTION

- A social skills programme for all primary students
- Particularly helpful for children that have difficulties in social interactions
- 16 lessons / 45min per lesson

WHAT'S THE BUZZ- INTRODUCTION

- How is it designed?
- Sequenced
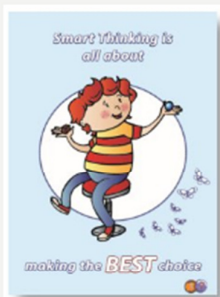- Active
- Focused
- Specific

WHAT'S THE BUZZ –INTRODUCTION

The Lesson:
- Introduces the topic
- Students practices the new skill set
- Quiz time to consolidate the concepts
- Play social games to build their newly learnt skills
- Information for parents

WHAT'S THE BUZZ –INTRODUCTION

- Designed to build 3 essential competencies
- Social Observations
- Social Thinking
- Social Action

WHAT'S THE BUZZ – GROUP FORMATION

- Teachers selects those that have difficulty in class in getting along with others
- Group size: 5 to 6, but sometimes only 3.
- Actual session time: 20 to 40 minutes

WHAT'S THE BUZZ
MUTUAL AID TUNING IN

- What to prepare
- The session plan
- Students experience at school
- Behaviour management skills
- Related theories to children or ASD children
- Grades the activities

WHAT'S THE BUZZ
MUTUAL AID PSYCHOSOCIAL PROCESS

- Dual focus
- One eye on the individual and the other on the group
- Group purpose versus individual goals
- Exchange strength versus facilitating self-help

WHAT'S THE BUZZ- POSSIBLE INCONGRUENCE WITH MUTUAL AID

- Educational model
- Participation of students
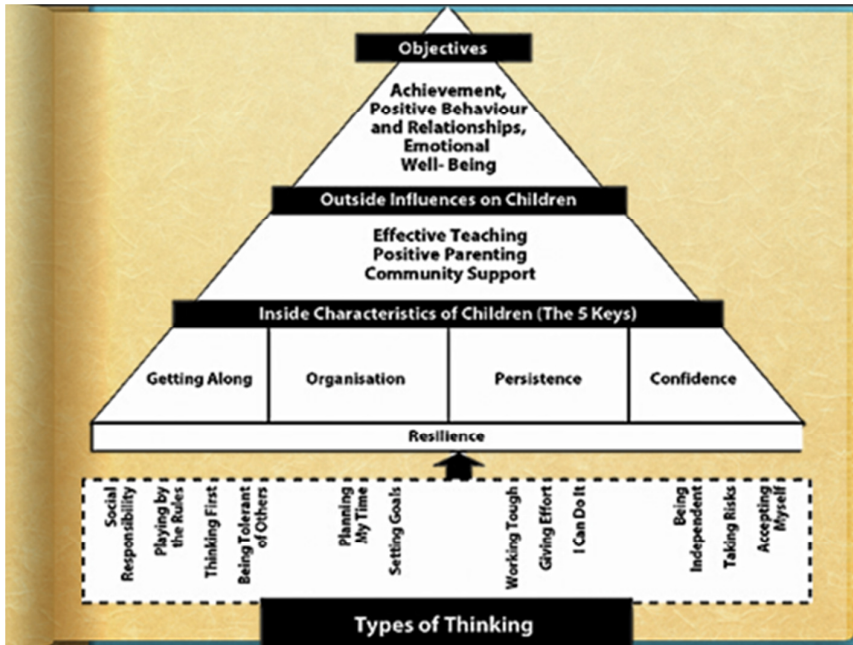- Use of professional authority

Program Implementation

- YCDI parent education (e.g., classes, school-home communication, parent-teacher-student conferences surrounding 5 Foundations)

- YCDI images displayed throughout school grounds (e.g., illustrations, signs, artwork that communicate the 5 Foundations and 12 Habits of the Mind)

- Staff development opportunities for learning about YCDI

- Regular assessment of students' social-emotional capabilities

- Incorporation of social-emotional competence as part of behavior management planning

- Early identification and intervention for students identified as delayed in social-emotional learning

Source: You Can Do It! Education (2016) What Is You Can Do It! Education?

Set of resources
Lower, Middle & Upper Primary Resources

Session Plan

Teacher-led, whole class sessions (30 - 90 mins)

- Introductory Discussion
- Discussion Questions
- Student Activity (Individual/Paired/Group)
- Whole class activity (e.g. role play)
- Further discussion questions
- Worksheet
- Sharing worksheet and reflecting throughout the week

Mutual Aid as inherently holistic (Steinberg, 2010)

Steinberg (2010) characterised the best approach to group work in social work as mutual aid that is inherently holistic. A holistic approach to mutual aid integrates the whole of person, not just their limitations. It aims to use individual strengths, knowledge and life experiences to promote mutual aid. It also expects people to develop their skills beyond self-help and towards helping others.

Strengths   Culture

Emotional wellbeing   Physical wellbeing

Challenges   Life experiences

Family   Environment

Comparison

Program Achieve & the holistic characteristic of mutual aid

Congruence

- Focus on development of strengths and social-emotional capabilities rather than limitations

- Promotes helping others through social responsibility and positive habits of mind

- Attempts to address Australian Aboriginal culture through the expression of "Hard Yakka" (Hard Work).

Incongruence

- It is a universal approach, does not tailor the program to individual differences (culture, special needs) which contribute to the whole of person

Mutual Aid stage
- Contracting (Shulman, 2016)

- Clarifying the group's purpose
- Clarifying the role of the group leaders
- Reaching for the group members' feedback
- Identifying the common ground
- Supporting members in Taboo areas (e.g. sex, death, authority, dependency)
- Dealing with issues of mutual expectations, confidentiality and the authority theme.

Comparison

Program Achieve vs. Mutual aid Contracting stage

Congruence / Incongruence

Recommendations

- Assisting students to understand the lessons and engage them in practice such as role play to aid their understanding.

- Timing of the session and a start/end activity e.g. mindfulness

- Different norms/rules for Wellbeing time from typical lesson time
  - Positioning of the classroom e.g. table positioning, sitting on the floor with the students and writing on paper rather than using the board, more peer engagement

- Involving a member of the Wellbeing staff alongside the teacher

- Use of resources for small group or individual work

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