

Good morning and a warm welcome to this 'What's the Buzz? TRAINING DAY WEBINAR.

**Today I get to be with you!
And, there are about 50 of you!**

You come from far and wide and from all kinds of backgrounds. We have principals, wellbeing leaders, teachers, counsellors and SSO's from schools, beginning teachers and allied health professionals from the private sector and private practices.

Many of you come from around Adelaide, some from the country (like the beautiful Barossa and Clare Valley regions) and a few from further afield. A special welcome to you Amy – all the way from Melton West in Victoria.

However, the one thing we have in common, is a desire to coach young people with the skills to connect, feel fulfilled and live mentally healthy lives.

So today, you get a baptism into each of the 3 'What's the Buzz?' programs, plus a whole lot more.

As happens in all good workshops, there's a little housekeeping first.

I've planned for two breaks today...

Morning break at 10.45am for 30 mins

Then, Lunch at 1pm for 30 mins

At any time feel free to get up, move about, nip to the toilet or get a coffee to refresh your concentration.

And, if you do, be sneaky and turn your video off for a bit!

I want you to jump in; ask questions, seek clarification, share and contribute.

But, when you are not speaking please keep yourself muted.

ZOOM is great, but one big disadvantage is that's picks up background noises from each participant and this can be distracting.

So, the golden rule is to keep yourself muted until you want to contribute. Then, afterwards – mute again! It's easy once you get the hang of it!

So this is the perfect moment to make sure you are muted!

The beauty of using ZOOM, especially at home, is that you can be warm and comfortable without being fashionable.

If you drop out and lose connection with me at any time through the day, don't stress.

Quit right out, refresh your browser and enter zoom as you did previously. I'll be waiting for you and will let you in – promise!

If your internet is a bit dodgy, then, there are 2 things that will help.

Firstly, move yourself and your device close to your internet connection for the day.

Secondly, you will find a more stable connection by tethering your device to your phone.

Finally, if you'd like my PowerPoint and notes and want them to train others – they are yours to take – just email me.

I can't go any further without introducing to co-creator and co-author of 'What's the Buzz?'

Here she is – my dearest friend, Madhavi Nawana Parker.

We first met ...

We never write together ...

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'What's the Buzz?' is an evidenced-based program.

You can read all the meaty detail on the 'What's the Buzz?' website.

What I can say is that the improvements measured in all categories were statistically significant.

The results were outstanding and were trialled by an independent team of researchers.

CLICK

But, we were not surprised by the outstanding results because we wrote the original programs on the broad-based research we had at the time.

Even back in 2011 we knew that programs built around the 'SAFE' criteria did best by far – in fact by a long way

Using this method, children and teens showed significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, and easier more cooperative behaviours. Behaviours were described as less risky and less disruptive.

So, we designed 'What's the Buzz?' to incorporate all the 'SAFE' principles;

- SEQUENCED– *they follow a logical break down of skills*
- They're ACTIVE - *or kinesthetic. They're all about the 'doing' using role-plays and rehearsal with feedback from peers*
- They're FOCUSED – *in that time is dedicated to teach specific skills*
- They're EXPLICIT – *by teaching the skills very specifically in each session*
- The 'SAFE' criteria enables a much better transference of skills from to learning situation to the child's POINT OF PERFORMANCE.

'What's the Buzz?' is now being used with children and adolescents in more than 140 countries.

It has become global and considered a gold standard approach.

Its focus is to teach young people communication skills, and to strengthen their mental health and resilience.

The bonus, according to world-wide research, is that when educators in schools choose to work within an SEL framework students also gain 10% in academic achievement levels as well.

So, today is an opportunity to;

- **Understand the depth of social and emotional literacy.**
- **What it looks and feels like.**
- **How it advantages our relationship WITH children, and their relationships BETWEEN each other**
- **How it becomes a protective factor for the mental health of your students**
- **And, finally, today is an opportunity to discover how you might fine-tune the program to make it 'sing' in your situation.**

Yes, finding one's tribe - or knowing how to find your tribe - is literally lifesaving.
And, ideally, the skills to do this begin early in young person's life.

According to Professor Julianne Holt-Lunstad and the WHO, 'loneliness' is shaping up to be a massive global health challenge.

Most vulnerable are children, teens and the elderly. But, none of us are immune.

What we are learning is that knowing how to create friendship and good community bonds are a vital protective factor against isolation and loneliness.

I see classrooms as small communities that can be cleverly engineered so young people get to feel the joy of being with peers.

The consequence of this, is that later in life, there's an imprint that radiates desire to build community!

Whether its through family, friends, work, volunteer or charity work, a men's shed, a community centre, sporting, gardening, dog or walking group – that desire to connect and be part of others remains.

What a gift to give to our young!

CLICK

Here are the 2 roads that can be travelled when teaching SEL values.

What both approaches have in common is a focus on the big 8 SEL capabilities at the top left of screen.

The road to the right follows an informally generated approach.

The road to the left relies more on the delivery of purpose-built programs.

Here's a glimpse of a few formally developed programs that I know a little about.

You'll noticed '*What's the Buzz?*' with these!

These are planned and sequenced and programs you can buy off the shelf.
All the work has been done for you.
Some require training.

Most are ready to go!
There's a lot to choose from!

When choosing a program;

1. choose one you are enthusiastic about
2. one that should meet the unique needs of those you're working with
3. a program you can embed into your group, or into the community to strengthen the culture you want to build

CLICK

For now, I'm taking you down the road to the right.

A more informal approach to SEL.

These are often called, '*Guided Social Interactions*'.

They're a captivating ways to engineer situations where individuals, often in small groups, need to listen, discuss, exchange opinions, negotiate and respond to different points of view.

What follows should provide you with some easy to implement TAKE AWAY ideas!

Let's grab a quick insight into the complexities of SEL skills.

If you were here with me – in this moment – I'd ask you to turn to your neighbour, or neighbours, and form pairs or 3's.

Then, I'd ask you to play 'Thumb Wars'.

Do you know how to play it!

But, does your partner know? Do you both use the same rules?

Will you establish a starting point? How will you do this?

Will you begin with a little 'slow motion' practice before you go competitive?

Then what?

Will you challenge each other – start slow – help each other?

Or, will you just go for it and bump your way along trying to read the emotions of each other?

Will it be the best out of 3?

For now, you'll just have to imagine to played with each other – and you played well!

CLICK

This checklist provides a snapshot into the complexities required for successful interaction.

To have a successful interaction most of these questions must be answered in the affirmative.

And, suddenly, the depth of SEL skills unfold.

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Guided Social Interactions allows confidence and skills to grow.

They can awaken a desire to be with others and value them.

Simple activities provide an engaging structure to continuously coach your group!

Or, we could move to 'Rock, paper, scissors'.

Yes, we want it to be fun, but it's not frivolous!

When working with a group, you might turn their attention to the TARGET SKILLS on screen.

You might task someone to step up and take on the role of COACH, to lead yet be sensitive to the learner's needs.

You might ask another to be the LEARNER, actively listen, watch and then participate.

You may even ask someone to REPORT BACK the skills they witnessed between group.

Encourage them to explain why some interactions worked so well!

Oh? If you're thinking this is all about teaching littlies, well, you couldn't be more wrong.

This is about teaching people of all ages, with and without, beautifully diverse abilities.

This is about building and maintaining a social and emotional 'sweet spot' so these understandings and skills become culturized.

On this ... the research indicates a measurable decline in 'emotional empathy' in males between the ages of about 13 and 16.

This decline relates to a sharp 14-fold increase in testosterone levels at this time. As you know testosterone rouses dominant and aggressive behaviours in young males which oppose compassion, tolerance and understanding.

So, during this time it is harder for teen boys to put themselves 'into the shoes' of another and respond compassionately.

As well, adolescent males around this time are often strongly influenced by social pressures telling them to 'act like a man,' 'be tough', 'hit before you get hit,' 'suck it up' and never show weakness by displaying emotions.

They are hugely dependent on environments and connections that deliberately engage them in this 'empathic sweet spot'.

And, with the tragic shadow of 'Domestic Violence' constantly looming over us, this is a reminder that boys don't emerge from the womb knowing how to treat women.

It takes years of thoughtful modelling from ALL OF US for them to absorb how it's truly done and WHY.

CLICK

What is it to be 'socially and emotionally literate'?

It is to be 'in-tune' with what's happening around you, and to be able to handle your emotions in a way that improves the quality of your life AND those with you.

So, this means we talk openly to young people about their emotions, and the feelings of others.

We teach kids about the strong link between emotion and behaviour. And, how to see it in themselves and in others

We share that some find it easier to self-regulate in the trickier moments, but there are loads of ideas and methods to manage everything we experience a whole lot better.

The research tells us 4 FACTS about teaching. They are on screen.

And, to the second question; can anyone teach it?

The shift in emphasis to support young people find a 'broader definition of success' is not an 'easy fit' for some educators; teachers and parents.

While it can be easily integrated into a family, class or a group's culture, it will feel foreign to those who've not experienced it in their formative years or work in a space where it's been absent.

CLICK

A 'Socially and emotionally literate' environment' offers the opportunity to introduce Dan Siegel's hand model of the brain to give them something physical to base their thinking on!

To do this, hold up your fist with your thumb tucked into the centre of it.

Turn your fist to the side so students are looking at a profile of the brain. Get them to do the same.

The fingers wrapped around your thumb represent the brain's frontal cortex, and the thumb is the limbic area.....

So, let's meet one another with an activity from my new book.

One of the best ways to help young people grow emotionally is to provide safe opportunities for them to share their ideas, opinions and ambitions with each other.

We understand this as educators and see it as one of the marvels of group work. To create a space where kids can listen, reflect on the thoughts of others, adapt new ones and learn more about themselves.

Oh? Can you do me a favour – please choose a number between, and including, 1 to 20.

WAIT ... got it?

CLICK

These are questions to stimulate both conversations and self-awareness in children.

So, which number did you choose?

Take a look at your number and read the question next to it.

Your task, right now, is – ONLY IF YOU WANT TO - to share your answer with the group.

Take turns to explain your answer, listen and contribute your thoughts.

I chose number 5 - What is it about you that most people don't know?

COVID19 isolation highlighted my introverted side.

Yet at the same time, I tick with this tension to be with and be in the service of others!

Another way to set young people of all ages up is to play 'Noughts and Crosses' for a few minutes.

Again, this isn't as easy as it first appears.

Often, one player can dominate over another, and a bad feelings can quickly emerge for the losing player.

Draw their attention to the TARGET SKILLS

Why not give each of the players a role so the focus skills are at the fore.

CLICK

There's 'Dots and boxes' and 'Connect four'

Old school and online versions!

CLICK

What about, Pictionary?

It's the classic charades word-guessing game.

And, it's great for small groups who are getting to know each other

This game is a lot of fun for ages 10 years and older.

CLICK

And, Monopoly Deal, but be warned – it is delightfully provocative.

The aim is to collect properties and steal from your opponents. And, other players will steal from you too!

It plays between up to five players, takes about twenty minutes to play and has a free Shuffle app.

Battleship is a game for two players, or two teams of 2 players can battle.

There's the standard game onscreen and also an online version.

The game involves listening, remembering, organising, critical thinking and pure luck!

CLICK

Barrier games are an engaging way to develop a young person's listening, language, attention and social skills.

Plus, they also assist with understanding of concepts around time, space and directions.

On screen, these kids are playing in pairs, but you can set kids up in groups of 3 or 4 with one being the speaker, and the others the listeners.

Every player will need the same set of materials and a barrier.

The aim is for the speaker to gradually arrange their materials behind their barrier while telling the listener or listeners how to position their materials in the same way.

When completed, the barrier is removed and both the speaker and the listener should have their materials positioned the same.

You can use include;

- miniature objects – such as small toy animals or figures
- picture cards from games
- coloured pencils and paper
- real objects
- maths materials
- Lego
- draw pictures together

Just google barrier games, or look on Pinterest. There are zillions of ideas for ALL ages, yes, even for teens and adults!

Don't be fooled, 'Feeling Bingo', isn't just for littlies.

It's for every age group.

It can start as simply as you holding an emoji, calling it's feeling and asking your group to cover that emoji on their card.

First with 4 wins!

Or, for older students, you can increase the difficulty by reading a situation that strongly features a particular emotion.

Their job is to cover the emoji on their card that matches this emotional circumstance.

And why might we play BINGO at any age?

Because the research tells us the more we engage young people in talking about emotions and naming them, the more we strengthen their emotional competence.

Be sure to pop the website, 'Teachers pay teachers' on to your favourites as this site offers lots of empathy styled games and resources for the cash strapped!

CLICK

Try this, 'origami paper cup' challenge with a group.

Let's do this ourselves!

Each of you have an origami sheet, or similar.

Our challenge is to use our EMPATHIC qualities, work together AND help each other build a paper cup that can hold water long enough to drink from it.

The FOCUS isn't to WIN!

It's for each person to support others, so everyone successfully builds the paper cup.

Have a water bottle at the ready so everyone can drink from their cup to celebrate!

Keep in mind that there are a host of 'board games' and 'card games' commercially available that teach empathy through to better coping skills.

CLICK

This is a favourite of mine I use with teens.

'Awkward Moment', provides opportunities for social and emotional growth.

Players try to impress the Decider by offering their best empathic response from their hand of cards!

The research tells us that compared to students in a control group, kids assigned to play this game showed improvements in their 'ability to imagine another person's perspective'.

They also showed greater social and emotional flexibility.

CLICK

There's a new genre of video games that focus on empathy, social awareness, social justice, relationship building, our connection to the planet's ecosystems and pro-social behaviours.

Do they work? Do they teach skills? Do they convince young people to become more empathic?

At this point the research is encouraging, but far from conclusive.

What matters most, is that this medium is now being developed to teach sharing and perspective taking, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness and a host of pro-social values.

What's more, is that this platform has the potential to reach millions of people of all ages.

While a video game won't make us a better person, they are a worthy addition to a combination of approaches nested in a broader framework.

CLICK

I love this PDF.

It's big, so keep it on your desktop. But, if you must print it, print it at work with work's ink!

It's filled with so many quality activities to help embed SEL skills.

CLICK

To round up, as you look at this screen you could be forgiven for just seeing a bunch of games.

I see much more.

I see opportunities to play games to build community skills, EQ and critical thinking.

'Guided interactions' are useful to develop friendship, turn-taking, emotional self-regulation, teamwork, cooperative, persuasive and empathic skills as well as leadership and perspective-taking.

Children's literature has long been a source to teach all sorts of concepts.

So it's no surprise that the research has now proven the value of using children's literature to build emotional awareness and resilience.

Stories assist us to showcase the challenges that people face while presenting ways to cope, or even overcome them.

The conclusion is that when kids participate in well-constructed conversations that analyse the behaviour and emotions of characters in stories, they develop their 'empathy' and 'social and emotional mind-reading' abilities.

CLICK

Never forget the value of video too.

LITTLE LUNCH, is ideal for groups aged 8 years and upwards!

Little Lunch is an Australian mockumentary.

Each episode runs for about 20 minutes capturing a 'social and emotional issue' at 'Little Lunch' time.

It's a candid look at primary-school life, and the stuff that really happens out there!

They are a great catalyst for conversations that analyse the behaviour and emotions of others.

Plus, there's an educator's guide and app to download so young people can create their own stories with the same feel.

Then, there's Milly, Molly. It's UK based.

There are 30 episodes. Each runs for about 10 minutes.

They are the best of friends but have very different backgrounds and interests.

In each episode the girls, and their friends, experience new adventures and the classic 'social and emotional' challenges that teach valuable life-lessons.

Kids adore them.

CLICK

Daniel Tiger's Neighbourhood is a beautiful [American-Canadian](#) animated children's television series.

Daniel Tiger, Mom Tiger, Dad Tiger and his friends are beautifully rich characters. A social-emotional theme, such as disappointment and sadness or anger, or being thankful or appreciative is the basis for each episode.

The theme also uses a musical "strategy songs", to reinforce the life lesson. Many of the "strategy songs" are available in albums or as singles.

CLICK

Bluey is an ABC KIDS production available on iView.

She is a 6 year-old Blue Heeler dog.

Her popularity has exploded into winning a Logie and winning a second season of production.

Currently, there are 52 short episodes available.

Situations like going to the supermarket, playing with friends, sharing, waiting, finding the right friends, being cooperative and visiting the doctor become life lessons in navigating life.

Finally, don't forget, 'Bing'.

Bing celebrates the realities of life, and getting along with others.

Each episode offers a mini-drama that explores what the 'social and emotional complexities' of pre-schoolers, and the grown-ups in their lives.

CLICK

To start to wrap up I want to return to the notion of community.

As human beings we are wired to belong. And from an evolutionary perspective if you didn't belong to community you did not survive.

Today it's different.

Today, if you don't belong to community meaning; family, extended family, classroom, school, clubs, associations or special interest groups - the risk of mental health challenges are high.

But, building community starts with us.

It starts with our effort to build the skills and confidence in your young.

We need to culturize our homes, classrooms and schools so community has a reverence.

The benefit of a connected community goes like this.

A teacher brought enough balloons to school for every child in her class.

Then she asked the children to blow them up and write their name on their balloon.

They threw all the balloons into the gym and the teacher thoroughly mixed them up.

Next, the teacher gave them 5 minutes to find the balloon with their name on it.

It was chaos. The children ran around, looking frantically and time ran out.

Only a few had found their own balloon.

Then, the teacher explained what community means.

It means we work together supporting helping and looking out for each other.

She suggested that this time, when they start again, that each student picks up the balloon closest to them and walks it to the person who's name is on it.

In less than 2 minutes everyone was standing still and holding their own balloon.

The teacher smiled and said, "You just did community. Happiness, friendship, even the goals and promises we set our self, is always improved by working together."

CLICK

And, here's another activity from my new book.

It serves as a metaphor about the benefits community can bring.

To do this, you'll need a group to work with, a large container filled with water and plasticine (don't use play-doh)

Roll the plasticine into two balls, each with a diameter of about 4 centimetres.

CLICK 1

Tell the group you're working with that you want to float this piece of plasticine on the water.

Hold this ball on the surface of the water and ask, "Do you think it will float if I let go?"

They'll tell you it will sink.

Argue and tell them, "No. I'm not listening. I'm doing it I my way."

Let it go and it will sink.

Say, "Okay, what I just did represents someone who won't listen, won't take advice and won't negotiate."

Say, "Right! Now, I'm ready to listen. (pick up the second plasticine ball) I want your advice and help. Do you have any ideas how I can make this piece of plasticine float on the water?"

Listen. Encourage discuss. List ideas. They will generate good ideas and try a few.

CLICK 2

Tell them you've been inspired by their help, and you have a new idea thanks to them.

As you flatten the plasticine ball and shape it into a boat, say, "What I'm doing shows how being part of a community invites all kinds of ways to solve problems and find hope."

"You helped me to reshape my thinking."

CLICK 3

Now gently place the boat in the water and watch it float.

CLICK 4

Ask; What should this remind you of in the future?

Answer; By being willing to listen and participate with others we can find ways to make anything work.

But, there's more!

Gently reach in. Take the small ball from the bottom of the bowl and place it inside the boat.

CLICK 5

CLICK 6

Ask; What does this represent?

Answer; it represents the power of being attached to a community.

Often, without appreciating it, we are carried along by the community around us.

The embrace of community is the biggest influencer on our mental health.

Here's an OVERVIEW of 'What's the Buzz with Teenagers?'

It's aimed at young people at the upper end of primary school and early high school.

CLICK

Here's the contents.

Several lessons focus directly on social media, how to use it, how to keep a balance in your life and what to do if you're being harassed or trolled online.

You'll also notice that the book has 10 chapters, and the other 6 are accessed online.

More on this, later

CLICK

That's right, Archie has grown up in 'What's the Buzz with 'TEENS?'

Here he is with his lifelong friend Joanna. Is there a love interest?

CLICK

Maybe! Maybe not!

CLICK

While we never mention his age, Archie will be about MIDDLE SCHOOL age.
He'll experience the same social and emotional issues that match the complexity of this age – social media.

CLICK

This new edition comes with an Archie Story at the beginning of each lesson.

Oh, have you noticed?

Archie now has 3 whippets just like me

2 boys and a girl – Kelvin, Luca and Maxi

How unoriginal!

CLICK

'What's the Buzz? for EARLY LEARNERS is for our youngest kids.

It's also built to be delivered by educators, school support officers, counsellors, youth workers, speechies, occupational therapists, psychologists and a range of allied health professionals, to build social consciousness in youngsters.

Archie's BIG BOOK of Friendship Adventures accompanies the EARLY LEARNERS program.

In the EARLY LEARNER'S students connect to Archie, and they help him solve the very same social dilemmas that they face.

CLICK

Please don't make the mistake and assume that the *Early Learners program* is just for JUNIOR PRIMARY STUDENTS.

It's not!

Our own experiences, trials and testing of the program revealed it's a perfect adjunct for mainstream year 4 and 5 classes.

Moreover, it works a treat for older children with delayed social and emotional development.

WE listened to their wise advice.

This is a great moment to raise a couple of questions.

Firstly, “When is ‘What’s the Buzz?’ likely to perform poorly?

The answer is when someone decides to put of a target group of so-called “naughty kids” together to iron out their behaviours.

***‘What’s the Buzz?’* aims at skilling children with the right social and emotional tools – skills that help them raise their empathy, self-awareness and emotional self-regulation.**

We need to put children and teens together who are likely to form a bond, enjoy one another’s company and because of this experience an optimal learning environment can be created

What else will guarantee a poor outcome for the program.

It’s when an educator, or leadership, decide to do the program their way. In other words, they don’t read the introduction.

Two years ago, at a Training Day, a young teacher came up to me to say how enthusiastic she felt about taking *‘What’s the Buzz?’* back to her new school.

But she shared her previous negative attitude about it.

Leadership at her previous school had instructed staff to, “Smash out the 16 lessons with their classes in 10 weeks.”

Staff was given no training and no resources. Instead, each chapter had been photocopied many times and distributed to staff. That was it!

Teachers detested teaching it and students loathed it.

Incidentally, this teacher is now one of the program’s greatest supporters and practitioners!

The program is more likely to succeed when;

You have no more than 4 students in a targetted group with one facilitator, or 7 or 8 students with 2 facilitators

And, when doing the program in regular classrooms, it is handy to have a school support officer with you. It means you have a freedom to teach while your side kick reinforces and rewards the behaviours we value!

CLICK

The 'original PRIMARY program' was released in 2011 by UK publisher, Routledge.

Now, it's used in many countries and is also a required text for teachers, counsellors, social work and youth workers in training at many Universities worldwide – even here at Flinders University.

However, I do have some news hot off the press.

It is that we've just completed a 60% rewrite, thrown away 3 old chapters and written three new ones we thought had greater relevance to kids and families.

CLICK

And, here's the contents of the new and 'Revised' PRIMARY program.

Each chapter has undergone a 60% rewrite, and this has given us a chance to take out things we felt we could improve on.

The rewrite has tightened up every chapter and we're feeling pleased. Also note the birth of several new chapters.

CLICK

This is a moment to ask questions, share a thought and review content from the session that had meaning to you.

CLICK

Morning tea