Drumming up support; Reducing Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms and Dysfunctional Behaviour Through Group Drumming

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WHAT IS DRUMBEAT

*Discovering Relationships Using Music – Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts*

2003 by Holyoake
with a group of young Aboriginal people and their Elders in Wheatbelt region in WA
Session 1.
Develop guidelines together, learn base beats.

Sessions 2-8.
Discussions, games, improvise, learning, analogies.

Session 9.
Create & practice performance

Session 10.
Perform
DRUMBEAT STRATEGIES

Incorporates multiple senses—sight, hearing, touch.
Body movement, thinking, talking

**Movement;**

Uses one and two handed drumming, clapping, drum ‘scratching’. Rhythms/beats.

**Group-work;**

Generate group guidelines, discussions, problems solving, taking turns, listening, develop performance and perform together.

**Individual;**

Reflecting, consolidation
‘Train the trainer’ type approach
(Master Trainers train Facilitators)
RESEARCH AND EVALUATION: METHODS

Unless you're using evidence-based procedures, I can't hear a word you're saying.
RESEARCH DESIGN

- Quasi-experimental, parallel mixed-method
- Quantitative results informed qualitative questions, qualitative results used to confirm and contextualise quantitative results
- 3 socio-economically disadvantaged secondary schools in Perth, WA.
QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTED

Pre and post program; 42 students.

Mental wellbeing
Psychological distress
Post traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS)
Delinquent behaviours
QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTED

Post program interviews;
• 18 students
• 6 school staff
• 4 DRUMBEAT facilitators.

Interviews provided perceived impact data as well as contextual and mechanistic information.
RESULTS
REDUCED PTSS IN MALES

• Significantly lower PTSS in males post DRUMBEAT (p<0.05)

• Those who screened above PTSD thresholds reported decreased PTSS post program (p<0.05)

No change in PTSS in females or those not reaching PTSD threshold at baseline
INCREASED WELLBEING

- Significantly higher mental wellbeing in males post program (p<0.05)
- Higher mental wellbeing in females - however did not reach significance
- Reduced psychological distress but did not reach significance
REDUCED DELINQUENT BEHAVIOURS

- Males self reported significantly lower delinquent behaviours post DRUMBEAT (p<0.05)
MECHANISMS ASSOCIATED WITH PROGRAM SUCCESS

- Being affirmed and increased confidence
- New and strengthened relationships
- Increased belonging to community
- Sensorimotor experiences
- Increased attunement, generosity, and compassion
- Mastery

Therapeutic discussions
BEING AFFIRMED AND INCREASED CONFIDENCE

“Drumbeat has helped me with feeling good about myself, how to work through problems and how to work out how to create good relationships”
Boy yr 8

“You get a lot more trust, other people said their personal stuff but then they trusted other people for them not to say it.”
Girl yr 10
SENSORIMOTOR

Senses

- Sound
- Touch
- Sight
- Vibration
- Bilateral stimulation?

Senses:

- Sound
- Touch
- Sight
- Vibration
- Bilateral stimulation?

Calming
Relaxing
Stimulating
Connecting

‘Yeah it was fun to do. Just keeps you calm and everything.’
Boy, Yr 8

‘Yeah [we get] anything off our chest on the drums... and then we will just add onto it and it would make an awesome rhythm.’
Girl, Yr 10
RELATIONSHIPS

‘Drumbeat has helped me control my anger, get along with my enemies and treat enemies with respect’
   Girl, Yr 9

‘Well now I am doing well with the teachers, they’re nice, I’m nice, they treat me like I am their kid you know.’
   Boy, Yr 8
It [the impact of DRUMBEAT] will actually last because, you know, when I hadn’t done DRUMBEAT yet, I used to sit and tell myself things like ‘my god- this thing - I can’t do it’ 

Girl, Yr 8
BELONGING TO COMMUNITY

‘It made me feel good of who I am, and it doesn't matter what skin colour you are, or where you come from, or what religion you are...you can belong in a group and in a community without feeling left out.’

Girl, Yr 10
ATTUNEMENT, GENEROSITY AND COMPASSION

“I used to fight with mum quite a lot, and we ended up not fighting as much anymore, because I’ve been using everything I learned in DRUMBEAT at home with my fights with mum’

Girl, Yr 10

“Drumbeat has helped me with feeling good about myself, how to work through problems and how to work out how to create good relationships”

Boy, Yr 8
PROPOSED MECHANISMS...

Multicomponent & multidimensional program

- Sensorimotor
- Therapeutic discussions
- Connection with others
- Attunement, compassion and generosity

Reduced PTSS

Improved wellbeing

Reduced delinquent/dysfunctional behaviours

Improved emotional and behavioural control and relationships
CONTEXTS ASSOCIATED WITH SUCCESS

1. Skills of facilitator
2. Relationships
   - Between facilitators and participants
   - Between facilitator and school
3. Voluntary
4. Timetabling
5. Performance location and support by school
6. Reputation of organiser/liaison/facilitator in school
TO INCREASE IMPACT???

• Create drums in art or woodwork
• Decorate drums in art
• Incorporate DRUMBEAT values into school core values
• Many others… ask students
Drumbeat: Drumming program helping Indigenous children overcome anger

The World Today  By the National Reporting Team's Kate Wild
Updated 6 May 2016, 1:36pm

It is physical, sometimes frantic and often loud — and it has emerged as one of the most promising suicide prevention programs for young Indigenous kids in Australia.

It is called Drumbeat and it uses drums as a focal point in workshops run for children who have anger or anxiety issues or who show signs of being at risk of harm.

"I have never seen a child it hasn't helped," said
IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER PROGRAMS

• Ensure programs are adaptable- needs analysis of group (discussion/questionnaires)
• May not need to rely solely on one-on-one programs to reduce trauma symptoms
• Potential for multi-component and multidimensional programs to have far reaching impact
Programs can increase awareness of Trauma-Informed Practice and its embedding into school culture.

http://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Family-Services/Intervention---PBIS/Trauma.htm