

VCAL COMMUNITY DINNER
**YOUTH ADVOCATES OF
COMMUNITY CHANGE**



About Youth Advocates of Community Change

Youth Advocates of Community Change (YACC) has been designed to create a sense of community and support for students, with the aim of increasing student engagement in education.

Evidence shows that students who have social supports such as family, friends, and an adult outside of the family home are more engaged in education. They have better educational outcomes and more hope for the future. The evidence shows having role models that support young people by role modelling achievable goals in areas of life such as career, health and fitness will increase positive outcomes in those fields for young people.

YACC aims to empower students to build connections with community by having the students as the drivers of the program. Students will engage school staff, family, community members and peers, to work collaboratively in supporting young people to engage in education, create hope for the future and create future pathways.

The program forms part of the VCAL program and meets the educational needs of students, whilst empowering them to create supports and change for themselves and students in the lower year levels.

Contents

About YACC.....3

Our Team4

Background Information5

Theoretical Underpinnings.....6

Ecological Systems Theory8

Collaborative10

Conclusion12

References13

Project Outline.....14

Students participating in the program will learn and demonstrate:



Communication skills
(written and verbal)



Time management skills



Advocacy skills
(for self and other students)



Coordination of meetings

Meet Our Team



Kelly Murphy

Kelly Murphy has over 10 years' experience working in the social services field supporting young people and their families. In 2015, Kelly founded the Australian Centre of Trauma and Wellness with the vision of creating a service that supports people and tailors' solutions to them, rather than people having to fit the service. To date, the Australian Centre of Trauma and Wellness has provided therapeutic support to people who have experienced trauma and adversity via face to face, video, and phone. Services include equine assisted therapy, EAP, brief intervention crisis counselling and facilitated programs.

In recent years Kelly has been working collaboratively with the education sector to provide educators and school staff tools, resources, and skills to engage and support students who have been impacted by trauma and adversity. Kelly has facilitated training and created resources for schools and staff to enhance their work with students and their families.



Andrew Jobling

Andrew Jobling is on a mission to create a wave of wellness and wonder all around the world. And helping people of all ages in making better choices and living the life of joyful longevity they are born to live. Andrew played professional Australian Football for seven-years.

He has thirty-years-experience in the health & wellbeing industry. He is the best-selling author of seven books, including, 'Kicking On,' his latest, 'The Wellness Puzzle.' For the last 15 years, he has been writing and speaking to audiences, from teenagers to stone-agers, and, helping them create the mindset that will lead to optimal wellbeing.

Andrew is an attention-seeking, mommas-boy, middle-child, who realised early in his life that anything is possible when you have a clear vision, apply the right thinking and take the right actions for long enough. He believes you can achieve optimal wellbeing, or any success you desire, no matter who you are, what your talent level is or where you come from, or, how unlikely or illogical it may seem.



Jarred Kellerman

An experienced counsellor, Jarred Kellerman has a track record in building therapeutic alliances and working towards client goals, drawing on evidence-based approaches. He is passionate about developing proactive wellbeing policies and programs with a focus on early intervention and resilience building.

Jarred finds it hugely rewarding to help design and deliver projects that promote social connectedness and empower young people to participate within their community. Having grown up in the area, he is well tuned into the challenges they face.

Jarred has a Bachelor of Psychology, Master's in Counselling and Graduate Diploma in Education. He is a former secondary school wellbeing coordinator.



Background Information

Youth Advocates of Community Change (YACC) is an initiative that has come out of collaboration between The Australian Centre of Trauma and Wellness, Kellerman Consulting and Andrew Jobling.

Through working with young people, a gap was identified in supporting students in education and to remain engaged in learning.

The program aims to utilise VCAL students to create community hubs in schools that include inviting family, local businesses and community leaders. At the hub sessions the VCAL students will take a role as facilitator and in arranging who they feel are important members of their community. At these sessions the VCAL students will provide a meal and discuss important topics that are impacting them that may be barriers to education, learning or engagement. The role of the community members and family is to support the students in being heard and use their expertise in supporting the students to address their issues and concerns. In collaboration they will address the needs of students.

This program aims to develop student communication, coordination and work readiness skills, whilst enhancing student engagement in education. The program aims to be multifaceted in enhancing students' future pathways and educating parents and community members about the needs of young people to help support them in their future pathways.

This literature review has been created to provide schools, students, families and communities an understating of the theoretical underpinnings of YACC.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Trauma informed practice

Trauma informed care is an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives - National Centre for Trauma Informed Care, 2013.

Being trauma informed incorporates the understanding that trauma can elicit responses, reactions and behaviours – biological, psychological and physical. Trauma can be experienced via (however not limited to) an accident, death of a loved one (including animals), family violence, child abuse, and neglect. Trauma impacts learning and the way a student makes meaning of their experiences (Shalka, 2015). Each person experiences life events differently and for some this can have a detrimental impact on their ability to function. Using empathy, nonjudgmental tones and language are the most effective communication tools to use with a person who may have experienced trauma (Perry & Hambrick, 2008). Supporting the student and their family in a flexible manner will help build rapport and create better outcomes (DEEWR, 2016). You may need to think outside the square/ think creatively to collaboratively support students.

When a student experiences trauma this impacts the development of the brain, in particular the limbic system (Sokolowski & Corbin, 2012).



If as a community, we come together to support students and their families we increase outcomes for the students and potential their future generations.

The function on the limbic system includes the hypothalamus, thalamus, hippocampus and pituitary glands. The limbic system is found in the frontal lobe of the brain. The limbic system is responsible for emotion control and impulse control. It is also where the fight or flight response is activated when a perceived threat is encountered. The amygdala decides where each memory should be stored in the brain, the amygdala then sends these memories to the hypothalamus for further integration and coordination with the brain stem, which can elicit the body's "fight or flight" responses (e.g., increase in blood pressure, respiratory rate) depending on the perception of the memory (Sokolowski & Corbin, 2012).

The limbic system predominantly controls appropriate responses to stimuli with social, emotional, or motivational salience (Sokolowski & Corbin, 2012). Such emotions include fear, anger, and feelings of pleasure that are related to our survival, such as eating (Sokolowski & Corbin, 2012). Therefore, if a student is displaying challenging behaviour, it is important to keep in mind the child's experiences of trauma and how this is causing physical responses in their body. Using a calm voice and role modelling a calm and consistent presence is important when working with people who have experienced trauma.

Strengths Based Practice Framework

A strengths-based approach acknowledges the positive aspects of the student and their family, and looks for exceptions to the problems. Highlighting the resilience that is already within the student and their family (Walsh & Canavan, 2014). Despite the problem/s, the student can explore what they do well, and what hopes they have for the future (DHS, 2012). By using and highlighting the strengths of the student, we are empowering the students to grow confident and make positive life choices (Short, Robyn & Cynthia 2013). Evidence has shown that students who come from empowered families, tend to function better than students from a disempowered family (Resendez, Quist & Matshazi, 2000). A study also found that problem behaviours decreased in the student when they came from an empowered family background (Graves & Shelton, 2007). If as a community we come together to support students and their families we increase outcomes for the students and potential their future generations.

Strengths based practice has been described by educators as drawing from students' economic, familial, community, and cultural contexts was a significant part of their work. Educators who practice strengths-based practice change curriculum to connect with students' contexts (Gardner & Toope, 2011). Recognising students-in-context, critically engaging in strengths and positivity, nurturing democratic relations, and enacting creative and flexible pedagogies, are the key components of creating and working within a strengths-based approach (Gardner & Toope, 2011). It is important that schools get an understanding of their students' needs and adapt modalities of learning and curriculum to reflect the need of students.

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Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s famous systems theory explains the importance of understanding a student’s whole life. Bronfenbrenner poses we all live in systems and to be healthy functioning individual we need to have healthy functioning at all levels. Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes his systems theory like nestling Russian dolls that fit inside each other and make up our complete lives. Each system impacts us as individuals. During a care team meeting it is important you understand each level of a student’s environment. The stages of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, are as follows, and can be seen in figure 1:

Microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979):

Parents

Relationship with both or either parent can impact on a student’s functioning. Refer to previous trauma informed information. What are the parent’s culture and expectations of the student? Do they have capacity to meet the learning needs of the student?

E.g.: cognitive capacity, financial resources, understanding of education context. Bring parents together with the students and communities’ leaders will enhance parent capacity and support them to meet the needs of their student.

Friends

Friendships are very important to young people. It is important for adults supporting young people to acknowledge this and support students to make and sustain healthy relationships. It is also beneficial for the young people to work together as a team to address issues that impact their generation.

Teachers

Does the student like the teacher? Does the teacher like the student? Is the student feeling included by the teacher? What is the student’s impression of the teacher? This are all important questions to be asking to gain insight into the relationship between teachers and students. If students do not trust or like their teachers this needs to be explored as this will impact student learning. You can receive information from someone you don’t like or respect, it is the same for young people. The benefit of having teachers present at the YACC community hubs is that rapport and trust can be built between students and teachers. Each student and teacher will have a better understanding and empathy for the others perspective.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

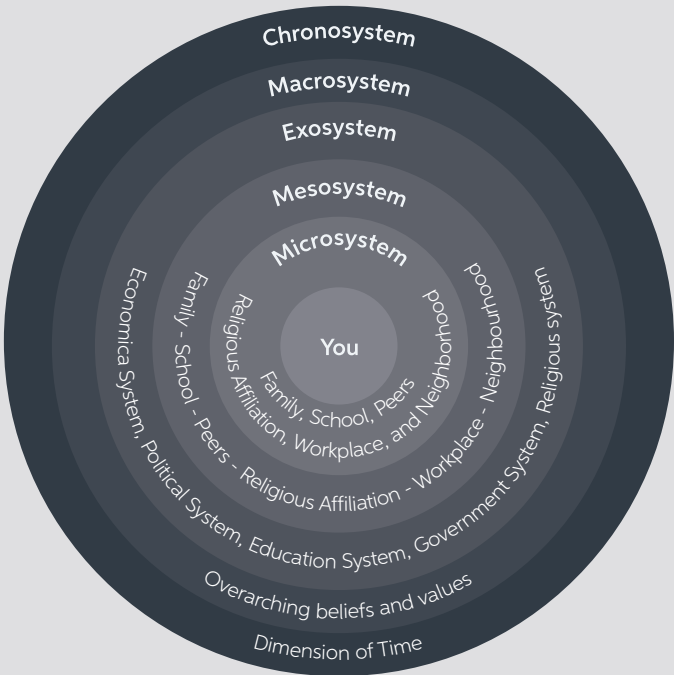


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979):

The interaction between family, friends, school, and work

Exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979):

Government



The governments standing on an issue can impact students. The government stipulates laws and has expectations. These laws an expectation may not be shared with the views and values of the family. Government also controls healthcare and benefit schemes that directly impact the financial and health of lower socioeconomic background families.

Community Services



Community service agencies may be involved with a family and provide support to the family through education, financial contributions and support. They may be voluntary or involuntary. They may be a welcomed support or viewed as an intrusion to the family. Local communities’ services may be a great inclusion to have in the meeting so they can take student voice back to their organization and into practice when working with families of students.

Healthcare



Doctors, psychologist, psychiatrist, dentist etc. Are they accessible to the students? Having them represented in the community hub meetings would be beneficial to help support students access these services and also give the practitioners student voice to include in their own practice.

Family socioeconomics



Is the family financial stable or is there financial difficulties? Does the family have money for education, books, lunches, excursions etc.? How does finances impact safety of living? Is the family moving house a lot or homeless? Are there regular meals? How nutritious are these meals? Inviting social services and services that provide basic needs may benefit students and their families to access extra supports. The services may be able to work ongoing and collaboratively with the whole school community. Is the family financial stable or is there financial difficulties? Does the family have money for education, books, lunches, excursions etc.? How does finances impact safety of living? Is the family moving house a lot or homeless? Are there regular meals? How nutritious are these meals? Inviting social services and services that provide basic needs may benefit students and their families to access extra supports. The services may be able to work ongoing and collaboratively with the whole school community.

Media



What the media focuses on will impact the students. They hear the news and watch television. This also impacts the student and their family’s view of the world. Examples such as negative media around asylum.

Collaborative

By working together, schools, community agencies, allied health professionals, mental health services, and other professionals working to support students, the complex needs of students can be met. This also gives schools the opportunity to access more personnel to work with the students through relationships with other services and professionals (Short, Robyn & Cynthia 2013), thus taking the pressure off the school to be the expert in every area of a student's life. However, ultimately it is the students and our future generations that most benefit from our collaborative approaches.

By working collaboratively with health professionals, services, students and their families we can build the capacity of the students, their families and the school to create sustainable and systemic change (Bentley & Cazaly, 2015; Short, Robyn & Cynthia 2013). Competent collaboration requires doing the correct things at the appropriate time. According to Lawson (2003) there are 5 phases of working in collaboration, each of which can be applied to the Youth Advocates of Community Change (YACC) project:

Connecting and communicating

This is a primary step that provides the foundation for collaboration. Begin by using shared language and use standardized forms. This is an opportunity for bridge building among the family members, schools and services (Lawson, 2003).

Cooperation

Reciprocity and mutually beneficial exchanges that are beneficial and promote cooperation should be shared. Participants will now begin to work together, trust each other and communicate better (Lawson, 2003).

Coordination

Builds on cooperation. Harmonizing and synchronicity will be achieved as shared goals are realised (Lawson, 2003).

Community building

Consensus building, developing awareness of reciprocity and mutual need, and developing the capacity for collective action occurs (Lawson, 2003).

Contracting

This involves each participant agreeing to their role and what actions they will do following from the meeting. This is the important step that gets the outcomes achieved. However, connection, communicating, cooperation, coordination and community building, are required prior to contracting stage to maximize the strength of the participants' commitment to their contract roles and actions (Lawson, 2003).

The 5 phases are not necessarily achieved in a linear fashion; however, all must be met. When working in a collaborative manner it is essential that everyone present at the YACC community hubs are there for the outcomes of students.

The facilitation of collaborative relationships between students, families, school staff and other professionals has been shown to be effective in helping students remain in school and stay engaged in their learning. There have been multiple examples of how collaboration works well with disengaged school students. A review of evidence to support collaboration between services and schools are discussed below:

Butler, Bond, Drew, Krelle, & Seal (2005), identify the clear need for schools and service providers to work collaboratively to support students to remain engaged with education. This includes the coordination and implementation of flexible services which can cater to the individual needs of students, and ensuring their educational experience is meaningful to them. This can be supported by the early identification of extra support the student may need and having clear processes for referral and support.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009), clearly states that there is no single solution to the problem of school disengagement. It

is stated that a comprehensive and flexible approach is needed that includes community wide multi-component/multi-agency programs. It also encourages the engagement of parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's education, which is supported by coordinating resources and services from the community for families.

Research conducted by the Mitchell Institute into working effectively with disengaged students found, collaboration provided students with a consistent, long term focus on their needs. It also provided schools with a clear rationale for investing their time and energy in collaboration (Bentley & Cazaly, 2015). These findings were consistently found across 3 schools based in Melbourne's South East trailing a collaborative approach to education.

Literature also supports the benefit to schools in having community partners involved with engaging students. One such benefit is the economic support it provides schools as community partners provide extra hands

on deck, so to speak and can often provide much needed resources and funding that schools may not have (Sanders, 2015).

A benefit to students is they will create relationship and links with local businesses that will help them access employment post education (Sanders, 2015).

Local businesses are uniquely equipped to help support students and schools to be prepared for the ever-changing employment market. This will increase student's employability skills and chances post education, assisting them to access a sustainable future pathway.

Students will also have opportunity to build on their social capital. Social capital is created and exchanged through positive, caring relationships in which knowledge, guidance and values are shared (Colman, 1988). Where social capital is developed in students so is their sense of hope (Sanders, 2015). Through working in collaboration with community partners, the school and their families, students will develop a sense of hope for the future.

Potential partnerships that could enhance student outcomes are (Sanders, 2015):

- Local businesses (large and small)
- Business leaders
- Sporting clubs
- Faith based organisations
- Volunteer organisations
- Senior citizen organisations
- Media organisations
- Sports franchises and associations
- Healthcare organisations
- Social support agencies
- Youth services
- Universities

There can be advantages for community partners to be involved with school programs and supporting students. Such advantages are to develop input into future employees. This can be a great scouting tool for businesses. It can lift the profile of business and community organisations by giving their time and expertise to the students.

Conclusion

Young people are our future and we must invest wisely in them. The Youth Advocates of Community Change (YACC) program concept is supported by evidence that shows the benefits of community involvement to students.

Through Bronfenbrenner (1979), we know that students need to have a holistic support network that includes people close to them such as family and friends, but just as important the environment and wider community. We must come together and support them and their needs where they are at (Waterstone, 2007). As a community we need to understand the needs and desires of students to then impart our knowledge and experience to them. However, we must first meet them where they are at to ensure they have their basic needs met and are ready to progress to learning and working towards their future.

The relationship with students must be reciprocal. As a community we must be prepared to listen and be flexible in how we approach the needs of students. We may have years of experience and our own lived experience; however, the needs of today's generation may be different to our own generation. This generation also has different perspectives that can help enhance our practice, relationships and businesses. After all these are our future employees and consumers.

It is also important to establish role and responsibilities early in the set up of the program. Having clear roles and responsibilities will ensure task get done and there is no cross over in work or that tasks have been left out. Having clear roles and responsibilities will ensure ownership is laid with the appropriate person and that everyone is in agreeance with the tasks to be completed

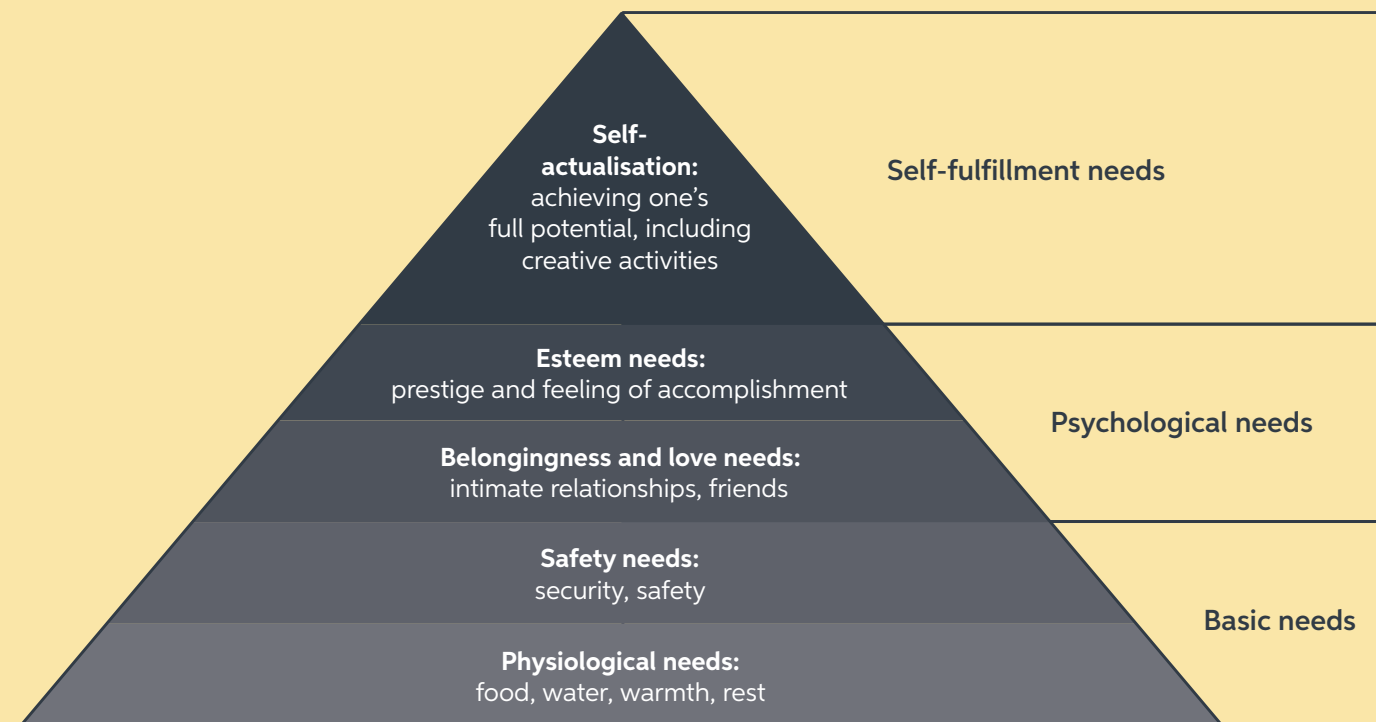


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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Project Outline

YACC Community Dinner Project Plan & Costs

The following template illustrates the typical rollout and costing plan for a YACC Community Dinner project. However, plans can be tailored to meet specific school needs and each item shown below is interchangeable.




The relationship with students must be reciprocal. As a community we must be prepared to listen and be flexible in how we approach the needs of students.


Item	Description	Hours	Cost
Initial consultation	YACC team to meet with school staff member to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">School climateStudent issuesBarriers to communicationVCAL project goalsProject components the school would like YACC to deliver on.	1	Fee Waived
Planning and development	YACC team to develop project / rollout plan based on the preferences of the school. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presentation by Andrew JoblingTimeline plan – for teacherResource kit – worksheets and teacher guide.	10	\$2,500
Presentation	YACC team to deliver class presentations on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Leadership and communicationProject planning and implementation.	2	\$500
Teacher support / coaching	YACC team will provide 5 x coaching sessions to the teacher via teleconference to support with the ongoing development of the VCAL project.	5	\$1,250
Materials	YACC will provide the following project resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">VCAL framework / mappingPresentation materialsClass workbook (e-manual)*Teacher guide (e-manual)*	-	\$250
Evaluation & On-going support	YACC will be available for ongoing support and evaluation of the project outcomes via email	-	-
Total		16	\$4,500

* Additional costs for printing
- Additional services beyond scope of the outline billed at \$250 per hour.

Book a free consultation with one of our friendly team members today:



Call Andrew 0414 973 315



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We would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of this Land and pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Kulin Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians present.