



CONNECTION

RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIP (RPP) NEWSLETTER

ADJUSTING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES

We hope this newsletter finds you safe and healthy as you adapt to life in a pandemic. The events over the past 6 weeks have been mind-boggling. Schools across Canada have closed, leaving students and teachers to venture into the world of at-home learning. Universities have experienced the same transition as campus buildings closed and instructors moved to online course delivery. We acknowledge that these changes can be difficult. But change can also be a catalyst for growth and innovation.

Under these unique circumstances, we considered how we might collect the final data for the study? In the 2019-2020 school year we had planned to collect student grades and two rounds of interviews with 28 Suzuki students. The second round was supposed to take place this month, so we asked the school administration team if we might change things up.

Following approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board and a letter to participants' families, we are now running online interviews with students. We are still bound by our ethics approval to record voices only, so students have their cameras turned off, but it has been exciting to reconnect with students.

We are grateful for everyone's flexibility during this time.

NEAR THE FINISH LINE!

In the fall of 2018 we joined together to form a Research-Practice Partnership (RPP). This novel idea led to stronger connections with our stakeholders - you - and so when you asked for more frequent, detailed information about the research we created this newsletter!

You are reading the ninth and penultimate version of Connection. We hope you have enjoyed reading about our collective activities and additional topics related to the research.

The final RPP Advisory Board meeting will take place on May 13, 2020 at 10:30 am and it will be a virtual meeting, of course. The final newsletter will be created for early June.

As the formal collaborative work comes to an end, Jacqueline will begin the intensive work of reviewing data, interpreting results, and publishing the findings. She will contact schools within approximately one year to present a final report and share the findings.

Once again, it has been a pleasure to work with students and staff from Suzuki Charter School and Calgary Arts Academy. None of this work is possible without your participation, and your commitment to improving student learning. We will be signing off for good in our final newsletter in June 2020 but for now thank you for your participation.

“WHEN WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO CHANGE A SITUATION, WE ARE CHALLENGED TO CHANGE OURSELVES.” —VICTOR FRANKL

INTERVENTION

Teachers are working hard to meet the needs of their students, and many are also caring for their own children.

We want to thank those teachers who have already given their feedback on our questionnaire, and to those who have posted two submissions! This information is valuable and will serve the purpose of informing the research questions.

If you are still having discussions with your students about learning, feedback, and making mistakes, whether it is with the storybook or any other source, please feel free to share your experiences with us using the Google Form.

PUTTING ON A BRAVE FACE?

Should parents put on a brave face for their children when they are experiencing acute stress? This is a topic that Christopher Bergland (2020) explored in a recent article in Psychology Today (click on the link below).

Parents' intentions are sincere - to protect their children from experiencing the same distress. But according to Sara Waters, they may be doing the exact opposite.

Waters, Karnilowicz, West and Mendez (2020) conducted a study with 107 parents and their children to explore the physiological effects and behavioural changes of having parents suppress their stress. What they found was that children reciprocated their parents behaviour, which resulted in a more distant relational dynamic and an increase in the children's stress. Releasing stress in healthy ways is an important skill to learn.

In the article, Sara Waters urged parents to honour their feelings, and their children's feelings. Bergland (2020) offered suggestions to help parents lower their anxiety, such as by engaging in breathing exercises and walking outside. He also shared a personal example of validating negative emotions with his daughter. It's a great read!



The screenshot shows the Psychology Today website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Psychology Today' on the left and 'Find a Therapist', 'Get Help', 'Magazine', and 'Today' on the right. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the text 'Find a Therapist (City or Zip)'. The main content area features a profile picture of Christopher Bergland, his name 'Christopher Bergland', and his title 'The Athlete's Way'. The article title is 'Should Parents Pretend Everything's Hunky-Dory, If It's Not?' under the category 'STRESS'. A short summary reads: 'Kids can tell when parents are trying to suppress their stress or hide emotions.' The article was posted on April 24, 2020. At the bottom of the article preview, there are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email.

HEADLINE STRESS - FOLIO AND 630 CHED

Jacqueline was recently interviewed by two news organizations about the stress felt by many from reading so much negative news. In the [Folio article for the University of Alberta](#) on April 6 she suggested that the stress we feel is often related to underlying feelings of powerlessness in difficult situations.

She also spoke to J'lyn Nye on April 7 from [630 Ched about the topic](#) and the importance of staying connected, sharing feelings, and not being afraid to voice feelings of concern and worry.

RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Dr. Jody Carrington is a registered psychologist from central Alberta who is known for her presentations to teachers and parents, and she is the author of a book titled *Kids These Days*.

On her website www.drjodycarrington.com you will find descriptions of her passions: connection, relationships, trauma, and grief and loss. These are poignant topics for current events. She hosts daily Instagram and Face Book live events to support her community, where she shares her mantra "not today corona!"



REFERENCES

Bergland, C. (April 24, 2020). Should parents pretend everything's hunky-dory, if it's not? [Blog]. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/202004/should-parents-pretend-everythings-hunky-dory-if-its-not>

Waters, S. F., Karnilowicz, H. R., West, T. V., & Mendes, W. B. (2020). Keep it to yourself? Parent emotion suppression influences physiological linkage and interaction behaviour. *Journal of Family Psychology*, Advance Online Publication. Doi: 10.1037/fam0000664