

Information on the content of the different Rock and Water workshops available.

Background Information

The Rock and Water Program - Psycho Physical Social Competency Training

For over 25 years the Rock and Water Training Program has been implemented by educators, youth workers and health professionals Australia wide. The Gadaku Institute is the overriding body that operates the Rock and Water program in over 40 countries around the world.

The training aims to assist in increasing self-confidence, self-control and assertiveness, to develop body language, body awareness and to encourage better communication skills. The Rock and Water Program provides the skills to help decrease feelings of alienation, low self-esteem and anxiety caused by anti-social behaviours in the classroom, out in the playground, at home, in the street and on the internet.

Rock and Water training offers practical anti-bullying strategies. The program develops alternatives to aggressive verbal, physical and written responses to fear and doubt, thinking and being in control through the use of grounding, centeredness, mental focus, self-respect, self-control and self-confidence. As a result of these strategies, academic achievement often improves.

The increase in self-confidence and self-respect achieved through the exercises of Rock and Water will provide young people with the ability to react to all forms of bullying in appropriate ways.

The foundations of the Rock and Water method are

Self-control

Self-confidence

Self-reflection

The basic principles reinforced are

Safety

Assertiveness

Communication

There are different courses that cater for the diverse needs of youth, educators, schools and other organisations.

Our original and fundamental program is the three day course which is a detailed exploration of the full program. Over the years we have further developed 2 day workshops. A 2 day specialist course for students with learning difficulties (ASD), A focus on Women and Girls 2 day course, and a Primary level 2 day course. There is also a one day training/refresher course which summarise the exercises, language and principles of Rock and Water.

Our recommendation is to do the 3 day course and then specialise in a 2 day course. (Girls, ASD or Primary school). The reason for this recommendation is that the 3 day course has the fundamental concepts and exercises that all the other courses are based on. We then adapt and modify these exercises in the three day course to suit different clients in the specialist courses.

Having said this there are many people who do the specialist 2 day training's without having done any other training, and they cope very well with the content and exercises.

There are some organisations who send people to do the training, and following this they hire a master trainer to come in and educate the rest of the staff at a one day training. The one day workshop is the best way to familiarize many staff with the Rock and Water principles, language, games and concepts.

All workshops start at 8.30am and finish at about 4.45pm each day. They are practical courses so you are up and moving, doing exercises the whole time.

Detailed content and other information on all our courses can be found below. The dates and cost of all the courses are on the website as well.

The Rock and Water program has been studied for effectiveness dozens of times over the last 15 years. For information on research see the scientific support and longitudinal study on the web site.

More than 60,000 people have become Rock and Water trainers. The programs are recognised by parents, educators and youth as not only hugely informative and revealing, they are exciting and fun. Participants go away not only feeling exhilarated and enthused but of having learnt an enormous amount about themselves. Participants gain a lasting impression of their own strength and potential in life.

Background information

We imbed the foundation skills of the R&W program into all of our workshops.

We see Rock & Water as a powerful social and emotional wellbeing program that focuses on the development of:

- Practical anti-bullying strategies
- Self-control, self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-regulation
- Communication skills and interpretation of body language cues
- Boundary awareness
- Alternatives too aggressive verbal and physical responses and bullying
- Thinking and being in control through grounding, centredness, and mental focus
- Mindfulness

The building blocks of *Rock & Water* are self-control, self-reflection, and self-confidence. These develop in both genders a culture of safety, assertiveness, communication and finding their own way. Regardless of the workshop the lessons consist of many fun games and activities, each of which has an underlying psychology or life lesson. The practical nature of these is very appealing but more importantly, the impact is hugely positive in creating strong reference points for social and emotional growth.

The Goals of Rock and Water

In the words of the founder Freerk Ykema of the Netherlands:

Rock and Water aims at the following goals:

" The program aims to assist youth in their development to adulthood and to become real, fine, authentic people (self-realisation) who are conscious of their own power and responsibility within society and the involving tasks.

" Self-realisation is only possible with the right amount of self-confidence. From this real trust in oneself grows the trust to dare and listen to feeling, intuition and the inner voice that gives direction and guidance on one's path through life. That is why the accent in this course is put on the development of self-confidence, self-knowledge and self-respect, boundary awareness, self-awareness and intuition.

" Self-realisation goes together with the development of morality. The awareness that people are really connected and form an organic whole logically implies a growing respect for people with different lives and of another opinion. It is the basis for insight and tolerance and that is why it is the starting point of this course. That is also why discussions about standards and values form an important part of the group discussions".

" A specific goal of the course is teaching youth to deal with power, strength and powerlessness. Boys and girls can be perpetrators of violence, and boys in particular are also the main perpetrators of sexual violence, but they can also be victims. That is why on the one hand they are taught to defend themselves from various forms of violence, and on the other hand they are taught to grow more aware of boundaries and crossing them.

"A major task for youth and their teachers is to learn to value and to control the enormous energy which is so typical particularly of boys in the eldest groups of primary school and the early years in secondary schools. These young people have a very strong focus on physical action and achievement, so that is the starting-point of each lesson. The program teaches boys and girls to use their power in a more effective way and shows them how to deal with different kinds of conflicts using the rock-and-water attitude.

Girls and boys learn to stand stronger in many ways. In the playground and the class room they learn to identify their limitations and possibilities, learn to communicate more effectively, learn to feel, set and defend their own boundaries and to respect others' boundaries too.

Some basic self-defence skills are taught. The emphasis is on simple, harmless wrestling forms such as the tai-chi exercise of "pushing-hands". Physical contact exercises are linked with other forms of communication in order to improve communication abilities. This physical approach encourages discipline and perseverance and teaches how to deal with conflicts without losing self control. As an important part of communication they learn to sense, set and defend own boundaries, particularly in situations of group pressure".

"One of the challenges of education is to connect feeling, thinking and acting. We start with physical games and exercises because most youth feel more comfortable with the physical approach. So, for example, we teach them how to stand stronger, how to be more flexible, how to deal with physical intimidation. But, since we know that it is difficult for them to integrate these skills into everyday life, we connect them with other situations and exercises which have less physical orientation and are more verbal exercises. That is why we call the program a physical/social approach.

The same approach works with mental power. At first we start with physical games and exercises. Learning how to control our body and mind in order to be most effective. For this we use three questions: What do you want? Which positive thought helps you to be successful (mental anchor)? Which physical anchor will support you in your action (for example grounding, breath control, be rock/hard/uncompromising or water/flexible/communicative)“?

“The program is very active with lots of physical exercises alternated with group-discussions. Each lesson is supported with questions and simple assignments in order to make a successful integration with everyday-life. Action, reflection and group discussion are used in every lesson”.

“In this unique psychophysical didactic approach the physical-emotional and verbal-emotional development are brought together as one”.

Content for the three day workshop.

The full three-day Rock and Water Program includes 24 lessons which address: standing strong, rock-and water attitude, verbal communication, mental strength and inner strength, the power of breath control, awareness of boundaries, empathic feeling, intuition training, positive thinking and positive visualising, prevention of sexual violence, group pressure, homophobia, body language and group-dynamics, success-strategies and expressing respect to others.

Physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skills. In this way the program leads from simple skills, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence.

The physical exercises, (action), followed by reflection and then group discussion in every lesson embed the building blocks of the Rock and Water program. (Self-control, self-reflection and self-confidence). Building on these foundation skills during the classes, it is possible to also concentrate on the themes of safety, assertiveness, communication, solidarity and finding a personal path (‘inner compass’ or dreams). This last theme is an important concept for young people as they face important choices and seek answers to questions about purpose and direction, which is mostly connected to becoming aware of one’s own qualities and desires.

The themes mentioned above are connected in the workshop by four threads.

1. Learning how to **ground yourself** (stand strong and relaxed), how to **centre yourself** (the strength/power of your core), and how to **remain focused**, (directing one’s attention and concentration correctly).
2. Development of the psychophysical triangle: **Body awareness leading to emotional awareness leading to self-awareness**. As we become more aware of our bodies and our experience of our reactions and emotions during situations that could be stressful, we gain insight and experience which helps develop the power of self-control and self-regulation.
3. Development of physical communication as a basis for the development of other more verbally orientated forms of communication.
4. The Rock and Water program teaches that all actions can be developed through a conceptual framework of apparent opposites of being the hard uncompromising “**Rock**” versus the mobile, flexible and connecting “**Water**” attitudes.

The 3 day program consists of two parts. Part one includes the first 15 theme based foundational lessons, generally suited for youth from 11 years old to 13 years old. However, the themes in this part of the course have been used very successfully with children as young as 3 and youth as old as 17. Part 2 of the course includes the final 9 lessons which focus on youth aged 13/14 years and older, with aged related topics such as peer pressure, sexuality, learning to make your own choices, solidarity and spirituality.

The program is a skills training program, meaning that mastery only occurs as exercises and lessons are practiced and repeated. There are a wide variety of games, exercises, role-plays and social skills actions, which are progressive and clearly structured. Mastery of the early exercises will determine the value and the development of the later exercises. All participants who attend the training participate in the practical exercises.

The effectiveness of the program, depends on the transfer of practice situations into daily actions. You play a game and to be successful at the game you must develop the core four threads. (See above). When this is completed successfully we progress to more difficult and sometimes stressful exercises applying the same threads in a more lifelike manner. In this way when a person is confronted with perhaps a difficult situation, they have developed skills and attitudes to successfully apply to the circumstances. A skill that must be used under stress (such as setting of boundaries) should be taught under (some degree of) stress. The objective is to practice in almost real, yet always safe situations so as to enable optimum transfer into daily activities. Group discussions, completion of personal journals, visualisation exercises and participation supports the knowledge transfer to everyday life.

An absolutely stimulating, exciting and fun workshop, but very exhausting to!

Content of the two day Primary workshop.

This two day workshop breaks down the fundamentals of the Rock and Water program to simple easy-to-follow steps. Generally aimed at children from 3 years of age up to 13/14 years of age.

This workshop and associated manual contains more than two hundred exercises and games. There are at least ten lessons for each age group starting from 3/4yrs of age up to 11 years of age.

The manual contains a concise psychological sketch of primary age children and the different phases of development which they go through. Games and exercises are matched to these phases. The progressive growth that children encounter and the different tasks that children face have been connected to specific Rock and Water themes, games and exercises.

The Rock and Water program can be used by children in all cultures with understanding and respect for the differences in cultures. After all, every child goes through the same development phases from baby, toddler, pre-schooler, child, adolescent to adulthood.

Children develop social skills and competencies through movement, particularly play, games, sports and exercise. This also helps them to become stronger, healthier and smarter. Children love to play and a child at play is a happy child with senses open to discovering the world around them. Play is the royal road to self-awareness. Much time and energy is devoted to play and exercise in this Rock and Water program. Each of the lessons contain a gem of wisdom, a life lesson that stimulates the social-emotional development of the child. This program is all about learning by doing and experiencing. The exercises in this workshop are predominantly light and playful in character and written sequentially and adapted to the level of development.

There is no better or more important gift an adult, a teacher or an educational institution can give to a child than a Rock and Water lesson. Children who participate will grow in self-knowledge and self-confidence and learn to live and work well with others. There is no doubt that the earlier you can start children on their Rock and Water journey, the faster they learn, the more competent they become and the more engaged in their life they will be.

Rock and Water has and continues to teach children lessons they will never forget and that they will always be able to apply in any situation and anywhere in the world.

Content on the two day Focus on Girls and Women's workshop

The Rock and Water Focus on Girls and Women workshop has been developed in the wake of the highly successful, internationally renowned Rock and Water program for boys, founded in 1994. Originally designed to help boys' social – emotional development, teachers implementing the program in their classroom found the lessons were equally beneficial to the girls participating. It was also evident that girls and boys differ in their social – emotional development and that the challenges of relationships, family, school, peer pressure, identity and roles in society were also different.

The Rock and Water Focus on Girls and Women training has been designed on the 3 strong foundations of Self Confidence, Self-Control and Self Awareness taken from the 3 Day Rock and Water program. When developing the Girls and Women's program, a 4th foundation was added – Stepping into Action. While most boys grow up with a strong sense of their physical presence, many girls for reasons – social, physiological and psychological, do not and this lack of physical awareness and confidence in their connection to their body can cause them to become “stuck” in situations. This can manifest itself in indecision, over thinking, staying in toxic relationships and depression.

While the 3 day Rock and Water training program teaches skills to develop a greater sense of empathy for others, the focus for girls and women is more about how not to lose their sense of self in another, to be able to connect and communicate deeply with others while being personally powerful enough to make their own choices in life. The flip side to women losing their identity in their role as carer (for partners, children, parents) is that those women who may have experienced disempowerment through abusive relationships, violence, discrimination or just for lack of good female role models may become disconnected from their emotions and empathic sensibilities and act out violently or destructively. More commonly amongst women, however, is that this disempowerment or violence is turned inward and can lead to depression, self harm, eating disorders and anxiety.

The Rock and Water Focus on Girls and Women uses physical – psycho – social exercises designed to enlighten them to the possibility of their physical strength, that can then deeply connect them to their inner strength both emotionally and mentally. The course empowers those in need of learning how to stand on their own two feet and to be the captain of their own life's path. For others who may have become callous in order to “survive”, it reconnects them to their empathic being, to their emotions, their own vulnerability and allows them to trust others because they are “strong” enough to do so.

The course is essential to all those who work with women and girls. It is run over two days and is supported by manuals, dvd's and other resource materials. The course is divided into 10 lessons but can be condensed or expanded to fit the time constraints of school terms for example. This program is already being implemented in schools, in community groups and welfare agencies around the world and is being received with enthusiasm by the facilitators we are training.

Supported by the central themes and the physical-social structure of the Rock & Water Program, this practical and detailed new resource is a must have for every Rock & Water teacher/trainer working with women and young girls and a valuable new addition to the Rock & Water Program.

Content on the two day ASD or people living with learning difficulties workshop.

The 'Two Day Rock and Water and Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and children with additional and related problems' is a unique Rock and Water approach that helps children (and adults) who are diagnosed with ASD to develop more self-confidence, better communication skills and strategies to deal with the world and it's sometimes overwhelming demands. The workshop will assist in increasing self-control and assertiveness, to develop body language awareness, and to decrease feelings of anxiety. Master instructor Marc Boas, Theo Kamevaar and Freerk Ykema have developed and written a manual (250 pages) containing successful strategies, dozens of new exercises and up to date information about ASD.

The Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) workshop includes exercises that reinforce four fundamental concepts. Self development, Safety, Assertiveness, and Communication. After completing the workshop, boys and girls have enhanced communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) and better coping strategies for managing stressful situations.

Specifically, after completing the lessons:

- there is a greater understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication;
- there are more reference points for controlling emotions; thus increasing self regulation;
- there are more skills, both verbally and non-verbally, to respond to situations adequately.

The ASD training course focuses on **effective communications strategies**, exercises with intent to **raise awareness**, strategies to **engage young people living with ASD**, learning to play together skills (social inclusion) and most importantly, the need for teachers/supporting adults to be grounded themselves.

In the training course, emphasis is given to the importance of increased **body awareness** and **body movement**. Many young people living with ASD won't engage in sport, therefore have poor motor skills, coordination and muscle tone. Increased body awareness and body movement will improve a person living with ASDs' overall well being.

The ASD course outline includes issues around bullying. Many people, particularly young children living with ASD can be a **target for bullying and teasing**. The Rock and Water skills taught in the ASD training course include simple strategies such as walking posture that can help protect them from becoming a target.

Personal safety learning and teaching is a core part of the program for both supporting adults and young people living with ASD.

The ASD training course explains how the Rock and Water program can be implemented as a standalone program or will complement other resilience programs already established within a school or service. For example, many schools have Occupational Therapists (OT's) on site doing lots of body work, something the Rock and Water program captures well. OT's are able to select specific exercises and skills from the Rock and Water ASD Program that will complement their practices.

Strategies to develop **emotional regulation** and **emotional awareness** are practiced and beautifully captured in the ASD training course. Such life skills are invaluable for people living with ASD e.g. Statements like 'high breath' reminds them to take some deep breaths to get back in their 'low breath' where they become strong and calm instead of losing it emotionally.

The ASD training course provides alternative strategies to get young people living with ASD to work with partners or in groups. This is particularly important for those who struggle with physical communication (touch).

Young people living with ASD often have difficulties expressing themselves. The Rock and Water ASD program is delivered using a language that is simple and effective.

For students living with ASD particularly in **mainstream schools**, **self-regulation** supports greater opportunities for them to learn in the classroom and increases their ability to receive messages from their teachers. The Rock and Water ASD training course provides effective skills to achieve this. For example: learning to relax muscle tension and breathe effectively. To do this, the program makes use of psychophysical didactics. The starting point is the development of emotional awareness on the basis of body awareness, which ultimately leads to self-awareness, self confidence, self control and ultimately self regulation.

When people in general - and in particular people with ASD – end up in a stressful situation, they often respond according to one of the following two stereotyped patterns of behaviour:

Rock (too rocky): emotionally closed, macho, surviving through power and force or

Water (too watery): too compliant towards others, not being able to assert oneself in a polite manner, or avoiding engaging with others entirely.

In both cases there is a risk that people are not able to stay close to their own feelings and will follow others even if they don't want to or they no it is wrong to. The Rock and Water program shows, first in a physical way, that both strategies of Rock and/or Water have their value, but that this depends on the situation. Games are played to develop both the Rock element and the Water element in each person. These games over time gradually progress into challenging and more lifelike or stressful situations that will ultimately be faced by individuals. In this way the development of correct behaviours in stressful situations is simulated and explored in a safe environment. We see an increase in self-confidence, alternative behaviours and improvement in self regulation.

Content of the one day workshop. (Refresher)

The one day workshop provides a quick survey of the 3 day course focusing on the first four lessons of the entire program. *Lesson one* - Standing strong - Ground, Centre, Focus and breath control. *Lesson two* - Introduction to the rock and water attitude, (in physical and verbal confrontation). When to be a 'rock' and when to be 'water'. *Lesson three* - Rock and Water in the school yard and in relationships

(what kind of friend am I? Too rocky, too watery?) It will also include *Lesson four* - breathing exercises, exercises for boundary awareness and body language.

If a large team of people from one organisation are to be trained, this workshop will be the best way to familiarise many staff with the Rock and Water principles, language, games and concepts.

Physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skills. In this way the program leads from simple skills, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence, self-reflection and self-regulation. The program offers a framework of exercises and thoughts to assist boys/girls to become aware of purpose and motivation in their life. Topics include: intuition, body language, mental power, empathic feeling, bullying, positive thinking and positive visualizing.

The theory section of the one day workshop includes fundamental differences between boys and girls and the influence of hormones on behaviour, feelings and actions. This is then related to the Rock and Water activities. The theory section usually goes for approximately one hour, the rest of the day is once again practical games, exercises and challenges.