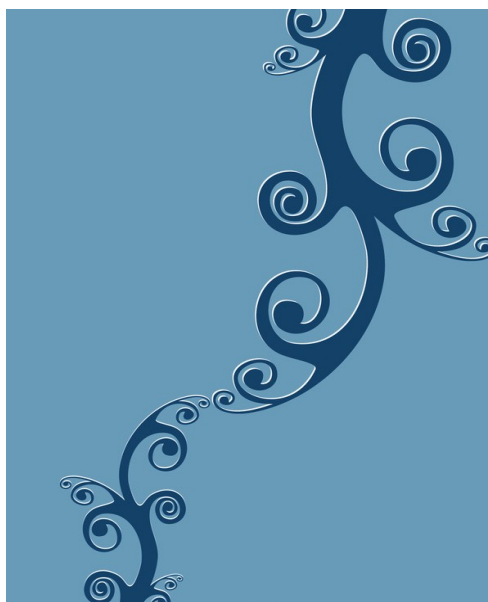


Welcome to our 8th Newsletter!

We are delighted to have two of our psychologists, Eilidh Lanzani and Ainsley McGoldrick, back from maternity leave. Other changes include Jennifer Howitt, one of our educational psychology assistants, leaving to go on the educational psychology post graduate course. We wish her all the best in her future career. Finally, senior psychologist Eddie McGee, has been successful in gaining a secondment with the Educational Psychology MSc course at Dundee University. Eddie will work part time in Dundee and part time in East Renfrewshire carrying out various pieces of valuable research. This will be great for our links with the profession and we wish Eddie all the best.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter!



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Learning Centre Research



Senior Educational Psychologist, Carole Campbell is working with Alison McGillivray, Quality Improvement Officer, the Educational Psychology Assistant and the Learning Centre staff to track pupils who accessed the learning centres.

There is a breadth of research that supports the idea that the nurturing approaches used in the learning centres address children and young people's

social and emotional needs which prepares them for learning in the classroom environment, therefore, impacting on their attainment.

While the short term impact is often evident to staff after a young person has accessed the Learning Centre, the aim of this research will be to evaluate the long term impact on pupils.

The Boxall Profile, which was used with the young people at the point of attending the Learning Centre, will be administered again to establish any improvements. We also hope to gather some qualitative data so that we can identify what was successful and what we can improve on to support the pupils attending the Learning Centres and identify strategies for supporting pupils in a nurturing classroom and school.

Enhanced Service Pilot

In August 2012 the Psychological Service began a pilot of a new service. Two psychologists, Joyce Fullarton and Gillian Cross, were given a time allocation to devote to this pilot. (We are still debating its title with a number of options such as the Responsive and the Enhanced Service!) Names aside, one of the purposes of this service is to provide planned intensive short term support to children, young people and parents at particularly difficult times. Perhaps initially calling it the Responsive Service was a mistake as we then received a couple of requests from schools to visit when there was a violent incident in a school with a pupil. We are still feeling our way with this service but in essence it has two strands ie a preventative early intervention role and a short term intensive support role.

Referrals to the service come via the school psychologist or from Mhairi Shaw and the psychologists' time has been spent in a

number of different ways over the last 6 months (eg intensive support for two Looked After primary children, a school refuser, and providing additional support to parents in a time of crisis).

Those who have used the service have been happy with this additional level of support and have commented on the positive impact for the school and the pupil/ families.



We have met with Dr Elaine Gillespie to discuss the potential to develop a much more proactive service by inputting to services already offered to young mums with the hope that we could help them understand more about attachment and how to create positive bonds with their babies.

With support from Mari Wallace, the Head Teacher of Isobel Mair, the service has also undertaken some Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) work with a class in the

Isobel Mair School. VIG involves filming interactions between adults and children and then reflecting the positives back to the staff in order to improve staff confidence and skill. It is initially daunting for staff to be filmed but some brave staff volunteered to take part in this project. To date staff report positively on the experience and have commented that it has been useful to see how they relate to the children and how important each interaction is. We are hoping that more schools will get involved with VIG work in the future as the research on its efficacy is very strong.



We will keep you updated on the work of this new service but if you have any questions please ask your psychologist or contact Gillian or myself!

Joyce Fullarton
(Principal Psychologist)

"I feel much better now. I don't get nervous coming to school anymore..."

Happiness Project!

Eilidh Lanzani, the Educational Psychologist for McCready Family Centre is leading a Happiness Project with the parents and staff at the McCready. This will involve training staff and running a series of workshops for parents during family day which take place every Wednesday.

The aim of the project is to apply some ideas from Positive Psychology to enhance staff and parental levels of personal happiness. This should improve confidence and mental health, and thus have a positive impact on the children within the family centre. The sessions will include a range of fun activities such as therapeutic dance and horticulture! We look forward to hearing feedback from the sessions and we will let you know in the next newsletter.

Attainment Gap Research

In the last newsletter we reported on research being undertaken by Jennifer Hunter, Educational Psychologist (Probationer), exploring factors that may be contributing to attainment data indicating that some children and young people of Pakistani descent in East Renfrewshire are underachieving in comparison to their peers from other ethnic backgrounds.

Jennifer spent considerable time gathering the views of key stakeholders in the authority looking at success factors as well as the barriers and challenges faced by pupils. The findings highlighted the complex interplay of a number of factors including (but not limited to) parental involvement with schools and language

barriers. Jennifer presented this information to directorate staff and head teachers and, as a result, a number of recommendations have been made that are already being put in place in order to begin to address this attainment gap. For example, a seminar within the authority for various front-line education staff to promote best practice, resource packs for schools and exploration of creative/innovative ways of engaging with parents from diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds.

For more information contact Jennifer at the Psychological Service, the contact details are on the back.

Resilience to Stress for Managers Training

We ran a training event for managers in East Renfrewshire which focuses on developing resilience to stress. The training event consisted of one full day training in June and a follow up session in November.

Members of staff from a wide range of organisations in East Renfrewshire attended. They reported experiencing stress in the work place (eg work load demands and time constraints) and personal stress (eg how to balance being a working parent).

We were delighted to see the feedback from the delegates was very positive. The

"Really enjoyed these sessions, helpful for both work and personal life. Should be rolled out across all people working in ERC to help them manage better their stress levels"

attendees particularly enjoyed the strategies for reducing stress such as using Cognitive Behavioral Approaches to combat negative thoughts and the relaxation techniques such as guided imagery, Emotional Freedom Technique and Light Streaming. We are going to be sharing

some information on relaxation techniques on the back page of the newsletter so that you can have a go at some techniques yourself!

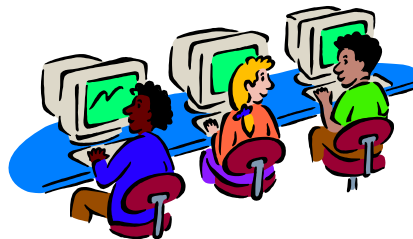
The second group training has already begun with another successful first day on 23 November 2012 and we look forward to welcoming delegates back for the follow up in March 2013.

"A very enjoyable and thought provoking course."

Inclusive Technology

The Inclusive Technology Quality Improvement Group has been meeting to identify and implement strategic cross-authority developments that will support staff knowledge and awareness of inclusive technology resources, and best practice.

The aim of the group is to increase staff knowledge so that practitioners can collaborate to make appropriate decisions about inclusive technology that can best support individuals and groups of pupils.



We recently sent out an electronic survey to gather information on IT resources that were being used across East Renfrewshire schools. The responses have been

useful and will be used to direct staff that have enquired about new technology to schools that already have it in place. We are also keen to set up an IT forum for ASN coordinators. This will be to gather views on how we can best support schools and give an opportunity to share ideas and advice regarding IT resources. We will be consulting with ASN coordinators to take these plans forward at the upcoming dyslexia and ASD advisers forums.

Bookbug Sessions

The Psychological Service is currently involved in the Scottish Book Trust Bookbug initiative. Bookbug sessions are run in libraries across Scotland for parents of children aged 0 - 3. Sessions are fun and interactive and help parents to learn how to bond and interact with their children using rhymes, songs and stories. East Renfrewshire Bookbug sessions are very well attended and enjoyed by both children and adults. The Psychological Ser-

vice is involved in a pilot project to explore the impact of a new development: 'Bookbug for the Home'. It was recognised that some parents were unable to attend Bookbug sessions within our librar-



ies and may prefer more focused support at home. Gillian Cross, Educational Psychologist, has been trained in 'Bookbug for the Home' and is currently working in partnership with staff in Carlibar Family Centre to support a group of interested parents. For more information on Bookbug sessions in your local library please see www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/libraries and look under the children and young people section.

Relaxation

Everyone knows that breathing is an essential part of life, but did you know that breathing plays an essential role in stress reduction?

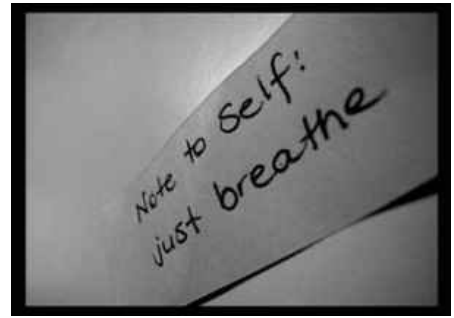
Breathing is a powerful determinant of physical state. When our breathing becomes elevated, a number of physiological changes begin to occur. Perhaps you've noticed this yourself when you have had a fright; you might suddenly gasp, feel a little light-headed, as well as feeling some tingling sensations around your body. Believe it or not the way we breathe is a major factor in producing these and other sensations that are noticeable when we are anxious.

While overbreathing and hyperventilation are not specifically dangerous continued overbreathing can leave you feeling exhausted or "on edge" so that you're more likely to respond to stressful situations with intense anxiety and panic.

Gaining control over your breathing involves both slowing your rate of breathing and changing your breathing style. By following these steps, you'll be on your way to developing a better breathing habit.

By using this technique, you can slow your breathing down and reduce your general level anxiety. With enough practice, it can even help to reduce your anxiety when you are in an anxious situation.

- Ensure that you are sitting on a comfortable chair or laying on a bed
- Take a breath in for 4 seconds (through the nose if possible)
- Hold the breath for 2 seconds
- Release the breath taking 6 seconds (through the nose if possible), then pause slightly before breathing in again.
- Practise, practise, practise!



Breathing tips

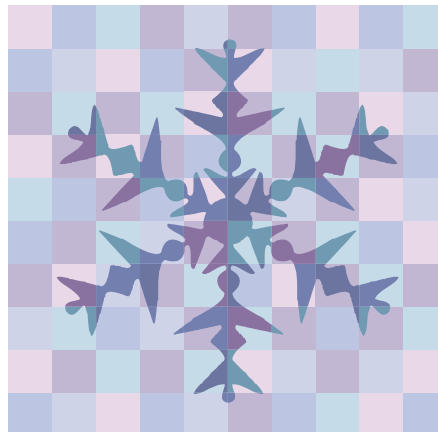
- When you first begin changing your breathing, it may be difficult to slow your breathing down to this rate. You may wish to try using a 3-in, 1-hold, 4-out breathing rate to start off with.
- When you are doing your breathing exercises, make sure that you are using a stomach breathing style rather than a chest breathing style. You can check this by placing one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. The hand on your stomach should rise when you breathe in.
- Try to practise at least once or twice a day at a time when you can relax, relatively free from distraction. This will help to develop a more relaxed breathing habit. The key to progress really is practise, so try to set aside some time each day.



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