

P1: Improving the Resilience of Children, who have a Sibling with a Disability: An Evaluation the “Sibworks” Program

Supervisor: Gavin Beccaria
Phone: 07 4631 2382
Email: beccarig@usq.edu.au

Research Purpose: This project will evaluate the effectiveness of the Sibworks program at a local level. This program is aimed at building resilience in children who have siblings with a disability. This project will assess a number of child resilience domains including Family Cohesion, Personal Qualities and Strengths and Difficulties.

Research Description: This program will be conducted in partnership with Disabilities Service Queensland (DSQ). Annika Moody (Intern Psychologist) Disability Services Queensland will facilitate this program, and her supervisor is Gavin Beccaria (Clinical Psychologist, and Lecturer). The honours student is encouraged to assist with the organisation and facilitation of the program under the direction of Ms Moody, and overall supervision of Gavin Beccaria.

The Sibworks program was established in 1999 at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital in Adelaide by the Department of Psychological Medicine. It aims to assist siblings to develop coping skills by expanding their support network, providing information, allowing them to speak openly in a safe environment and strengthen their communication with their families. This program is fun and interactive, and will be conducted twice a week for 90 minutes each. It is a six-week program. The program is designed for 8-13 year olds, however, there may be two distinct groups (i.e. 8-10, and 11-13). It is anticipated that the program will be run in the second school term 2009 (i.e. April to June)

The proposed study will take a closer look at the benefits of such a program. Results will support its functionality within Disability Services QLD and other non-government agencies that support families with children with disabilities.

While there is no unified definition of childhood resilience, in a review of the literature Place, Reynolds, Cousins, & O’Neill (2002) outlined three broad protective factors for resilience individual factors, family factors and community factors.

Thus the measures used in the thesis will include
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (individual)
Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – children (individual)
Child Behaviour Checklist – (competence scales) (individual)
Family Adaptation and Cohesion Scales (family)
Self Description Questionnaire (individual and community)
(All scales are held by the USQ Test Library with the exception of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and is freely available on the web).

Students are expected to read up on childhood resilience, positive and negative affect, families, and disability.

Students are encouraged to read the following references:

- Armstrong, M. I., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., & Ungar, M. T. (2005). Pathways Between Social Support, Family Well Being, Quality of Parenting, and Child Resilience: What We Know. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 14(2), 269-281.
- Giallo, R., & Gavidia-Payne, S. (2006). Child, parent and family factors as predictors of adjustment for siblings of children with a disability. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 50(12), 937-948.
- Grant, G., Ramcharan, P., & Flynn, M. (2007). Resilience in families with children and adult members with intellectual disabilities: Tracing elements of a psycho-social model. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 20(6), 563-575.
- Morison, J. E., Bromfield, L. M., & Cameron, H. J. (2003). A Therapeutic Model for Supporting Families of Children with a Chronic Illness or Disability. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 8(3), 125-130.
- Pilowsky, T., Yirmiya, N., Doppelt, O., Gross-Tsur, V., & Shalev, R. S. (2004). Social and emotional adjustment of siblings of children with autism. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(4), 855-865.
- Place, M., Reynolds, J., Cousins, A., & O'Neill, S. (2002). Developing a resilience package for vulnerable children. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 7(4), 162-167.
- Retzlaff, R. d. (2007). Families of children with Rett syndrome: Stories of coherence and resilience. *Families, Systems, & Health*, 25(3), 246-262.
- White, B., Driver, S., & Warren, A.-M. (2008). Considering resilience in the rehabilitation of people with traumatic disabilities. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 53(1), 9-17.

Students should also review the following websites

<http://www.siblingsaustralia.org.au/default.asp>

<http://www.sdqinfo.com/>

Participants:

DSQ Toowoomba will recruit participants. Participants are children who have a sibling with a disability. It will provide an opportunity for these young people to share experiences in a non-judgemental safe environment.

There may be one or two programs depending on interest with 6 - 12 participants in each group. Students may be asked to assist with administration of questionnaires to children and parents (with the intern psychologist), setting up the room and participating in activities. Participation in this project will provide some practical experience for students who would like to peruse a career in clinical psychology.

Methodology:

(a) *Questionnaires that will be used*
As stated above

(b) *Data collection information (i.e., where data collection will occur)*
Data collection will occur at the Toowoomba DSQ offices

(d) The role that the student will play in data collection

Students may contact parents / children, may be present for the administration of the questionnaires, and can assist with the scoring of the questionnaire.

(e) If data collection is going to be shared with another project

The program is part of the supervision process of Annika Moody. USQ Human Research and Ethics Committee have approved this project (HO8REA026). Some minor modifications are currently being made and will be brought to the attention of the committee.

Data Analysis:

(a) Broad type of analysis (i.e., quantitative/qualitative)

Quantitative – either small sample or multiple N=1

(b) The level of analytical independence that you expect from the student

Student will need to understand the rationale of the analyses used and how to run and interpret SPSS

(c) If student is expected to engage in analyses that have not been covered in their undergraduate degree, indicate how the student is expected to obtain these skills and knowledge.

No complex analyses are required

(d) Brief overview of statistical/data tasks that the student will be expected to perform (e.g., data screening, checking psychometric properties of questionnaires, separating participants into particular groups based on questionnaire responses, etc)

Data Screening

Checking psychometric properties of Questionnaires

Pre and Post program assessment – Non parametric tests may be needed

Student friendliness:

(a) Whether project is suitable for external/on campus students.

Students will ideally be located in SE Qld, and have ready access to Toowoomba especially while the program is being run.

(b) If the student needs to travel for data collection, make this clear in this section.

Ideally this project is for a student who is keen on observing a treatment program

(c) Supervision expectations (e.g., weekly, fortnightly, face-to-face, etc)

Initially fortnightly then Monthly

The student will need a Blue Card to work on this project.

Further reading:

Include 2 or 3 key readings that may help the student get a feel for the type of project they would be doing.

As above

Expected research outcomes: Joint presentation with Annika Moody at the APS conference 2010 and conference proceeding or entry level journal.

Ethics:

Ethical approval will be sought by supervisor; or

Ethics approved – numberHO8REA026

Resources:

- X Project able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit for testing forms
- Project not able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit – additional funds will come from:

Refereces

Place, M., Reynolds, J., Cousins, A., & O'Neill, S. (2002). Developing a resilience package for vulnerable children. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 7(4), 162-167.

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