



PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS

Psychological Readiness for Early Adolescence (PReAD); a targeted intervention course designed to enhance resilience and preparedness within the adolescent cohort

What is *Psychological Readiness*

Psychological Readiness is, most basically, the degree of preparedness to act or respond to a stimulus. Within the adolescent (educational) context, **Psychological Readiness** may refer to the capacity of an adolescent to effectively, and appropriately, respond to the range of experiences commonly associated with this age group.

The objectives of this course, designed for adolescents (age 12-13), is to enhance and promote a number of personal qualities including:



Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Social Management

Empathy

Foresight

The ***Psychological Readiness for Early Adolescence (PReAD)*** course provides participants with foundational skills in emotional regulation. This has recently been reaffirmed, following Australian research conducted in schools, as a critically important factor in reducing the likelihood of delinquent behaviour¹. The course curriculum incorporates the central tenets of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), as well as psychoeducation drawn from areas of specialisation (including drug and alcohol counselling). The curriculum specifically addresses core risk factors, including in relation to shortcomings in executive functioning, that contribute to involvement antisocial behaviour.

The course also addresses adolescent on-line activity, including through principles of accountability and responsibility. Emerging research has shown that at-risk adolescents remain more likely to engage in misuse of technology. One central component of this area of the curriculum remains participants signing an agreement that symbolises both an understanding of, and commitment to, the school's on-line policy. Notably, consequences of misuse are detailed and explained to each participant².

1 Modecki, K. L., Uink, B., & Barber, B.L. . Antisocial Behaviour During the Teenage Years: Understanding Developmental Risks. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, No. 556 July 2018.

2 Disciplinary action may, for example, incorporate temporary monitoring of a student's on-line activities (requiring student/parental consent).



The **Psychological Readiness for Early Adolescence** course has been developed utilising a confluence of evidence-based methodologies, including:

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING
RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT)
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY
MINDFULNESS

Methodologies for course delivery have been derived from long-standing learning and development applications within the public and private sector. Notably, course delivery incorporates physical activity (mild) including within the context of team exercises.

This course is designed to augment a whole of school mental health and wellbeing strategy.

Course

This program is designed for implementation within small groups (four). The target age range is 12-13 (grade seven/eight).

The program has eight discrete modules and is designed to be implemented over (8) consecutive weeks, scheduled on a preferred school day, throughout the school term. Participants are encouraged to complete all eight modules.

Course content is structured to ensure flexibility in participant selection; each day of the program is 'stand-alone' requiring no previous knowledge of content.

Each module of the training course retains a core theme with related learning objectives. As noted, the course methodology relies heavily on experiential learning techniques (and the experiential learning cycle) and incorporates a Socratic teaching technique.

The program is delivered on school grounds (pending available resources), during school hours.

The **Psychological Readiness** theoretical construct is a confluence of systems and theories that have been developed to improve functioning through the life span. The **PReAD** course curriculum, in particular, identifies the fundamental importance of interpersonal relationships (familial/peer/scholastic) and related styles of communication. An overarching course theme remains an emphasis on personal responsibility within the context of thoughts, emotions, and consequent behaviours.



Cost

The cost of delivery of the course will remain dependent on availability of (school) facilities and will be charged at a daily rate. A minimum of one course instructor to four participants is maintained. Each training course is overseen by a specialist adolescent psychologist.

Course Participants

Selection of participants is by school referral process. Course content reflects age-appropriate learning constructs pertinent to psychological functioning. Parental consent is mandatory.

This course differentiates itself through an emphasis on experiential learning, practical application of psychological theory, and an emphasis on developing '*Psychological Readiness*' in anticipation of environmental stressors and triggers. Participants are required to actively engage in the learning process through repeated involvement in role play scenarios.

The course is designed for participants who are designated 'at-risk' of school suspension, or who are currently the subject of school disciplinary processes.

Research Base

The Psychological Readiness suite of programs have been developed by iModality Pty Ltd. The company's founder, Mr. Damien Thomas, has remained a registered psychologist for approximately 20 years. His initial work within the field of juvenile delinquency has included post graduate research into the antecedents of youth-based aberrant behaviour (juvenile delinquency). Most recently Mr. Thomas has completed a large-scale research project within the NSW Department of Education examining antisocial and extremist incidents within schools. Mr. Thomas has developed the current Psychological Readiness course curriculum on the basis of both long-term practical experience as a psychologist, as well involvement in related research projects. He continues to consult to non-government and government agencies, including within Europe, on matters pertinent to the management of antisocial and extremist behaviour within schools.

It remains iModality's philosophy that the existential, and evolving, proliferation of mental health-related challenges (most notably within the youth context) requires innovative and dynamic solutions. There remains an evidence base that targeted programs are an effective counter measure in response to adolescents displaying 'at-risk' behaviours. Moreover, structured community programs and school-based extracurricular activities that provide opportunities to interact with pro-social peers, learn skills and interact with adults in positive settings (such as volunteering and community service activities) have been found to be associated with reduced antisocial behaviour in high risk youth, with no negative effects on participating low-risk youth. Moreover, emerging research has emphasised the importance of providing targeted programs focussing on emotional regulation, and anger control in particular, within the early adolescent age group.

Contact

Further details relating to the Psychological Readiness training course can be provided by contacting iModality at business@imodality.com.au.