

ROCK & WATER EVALUATION REPORT 2003-2004

Boys in Schools Program, Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle Australia

I *ntroduction*

In 1999, Richard Fletcher of the Boys in Schools Program invited Freerk Ykema to be keynote speaker at the initial *Working with Boys, Building Fine Men* Conference. In that same year another small workshop was organised for teachers and following excellent feedback and great demand from teachers, the program has spread across Australia like wildfire. Those initial workshops heralded the beginning of a long and valued collaboration between Freerk Ykema of the Gadaku Institute and the Boys in Schools Program, Family Action centre, University of Newcastle. The Boys in Schools Program has been associated with the development of Rock and Water in Australia, working closely with Freerk to organise three and one day training programs for teachers, information seminars for teachers and parents, and to develop resources and support networks for teachers using the program in schools and youth centres. Information in this report has been gathered from teachers who attended the training programs in 2003. The comments of the teachers speak for themselves. In 2003, several schools conducted internal evaluations of the Rock and Water programs operating in their schools. These also indicate that both boys and girls of primary and secondary age have greatly benefited from participating in the program.

In 2001, my son Jack, then 19 years, and I attended a three day training course. Speaking from this personal experience, we both greatly value the experiences of this program and continue to notice the impact of the personal and professional development we received then. The Boys in Schools Program is proud to be associated with this inspiring program and presenter.

Deborah Hartman
Manager/Team Leader Boys in Schools Program.

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R *ock & Water Program Description*

The Rock and Water program offers teachers/counsellors/youth workers a new way to interact with boys (and girls) using physical/social teaching. Physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skill development. In this way the program leads from simple self defence, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence. The program offers a framework of exercises and thoughts about boys and manhood to assist boys to become aware of their purpose and motivation in life.

Topics include: intuition, body language, mental power, empathic feeling, positive thinking and positive visualizing. Bullying, sexual harassment, homophobia, goals in life, desires and following an inner compass is also discussed.

The Presenter

Freerk Ykema is a former Physical Education and Remedial Teacher and counsellor in the Netherlands. Currently he directs three Rock & Water Institutes throughout Europe and Australia. He

developed the Rock & Water Course in 1995 to address motivation and self confidence in primary and secondary schools. The course has been awarded the best education program targeting boys education in the Netherlands. After four tours to Australia, over 3,000 Australian teachers have been certified to teach the program. It is now practiced in many schools around Australia.

Content of Training Programs for Teachers

Day One

This workshop provides a survey of the entire course (including teaching materials). The emphasis is on the contents of Lesson 1,2,3,4: standing strong, the rock and water attitude in physical, mental and social contexts; dealing with pressure from others.

Day Two

This workshop extends the range of exercises and topics: breathing to extend physical power and to keep self control; the body language of The Tunnel and of The Beach; feeling, setting and respecting your own and other people's boundaries. All lessons from 1 to 8 are demonstrated and practiced.

Day Three

Lessons 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are about self realisation and are more suitable for older students. They address lack of direction, sexuality and personal development. Lessons 9 to 13 are often best directed at boys only.

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***S*chool Programs**

Three Day Rock and Water Workshops 2003

Twenty Three Day Rock and Water workshops were held in 2003 throughout Australia with an average number of 33 participants per workshop (attending each of the three days).

Venues included:

Darwin High School, Darwin NT
St Laurence College, South Brisbane QLD
St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully VIC
Parade College, Melbourne VIC
Cabra College, Cumberland Park SA
Wesley College, South Perth WA
Stromlo High School, Canberra ACT
Merrylands High School, Sydney NSW Woolgoolga Primary School, Woolgoolga NSW West Wallsend High School, West Wallsend NSW Banks High School, Sydney NSW
Melrose High School, Canberra NSW
Swansea High School, Swansea NSW

Other forms of Rock and Water workshops were also conducted by Boys in School Program Instructors in 2003 including Advanced Training (2 x 2.5 day workshops) and approx. 4 x 1 day Introductory workshops.

Currently there are approximately 60 Advanced Trainers in Australia. It is projected that in 2004 an additional 350 people will have completed 3 day Rock and Water Training via Boys in Schools Program initiated workshops along with 10 x Introductory 1 Day Workshops. (350 people)

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Evaluation - 3 day training workshops Data

The data used in the analysis of Rock and Water workshops held in 2003 is based on responses to Rock and Water Evaluation Forms (Refer to Attachment 1: Rock and Water Evaluation Form)

A random sample of 100 participant evaluation forms were used out of a total of 673 three day workshop participants in 2003.

Participants

The participants represented both Primary and Secondary, Government and Non-Government schools and included a range of representatives from within those schools (Principals, Counselors, Classroom Teachers, Support Teachers etc.)

Amongst the sample group organizations such as Catholic Education Office, Department of Education and Training, Youth Services, Centacare, State Health Promotions Unit, Behaviour Teams, Adolescent Medicine and Family Counselors were also included.

Out of the random sample, 56% of respondents were male, 44% female.

Responses

Question:

Question:

How are the ideas, exercises and approach of Rock and Water expected to be used?

83% of respondents expected to use Rock and Water in Schools. Other responses included the use of the program in Youth Groups (8), Juvenile Justice (3), along with (1) each of ; sons, daughters and family members; veterans; retreats; with adult groups; and in drama classes.

What will the ages of participants you will work with be?

NB A number of respondents selected two categories (e.g. 10-12 and 13-18 year of age) of participants with whom they intend to work with using Rock and Water.

<i><10yrs</i>	<i>10-12yrs</i>	<i>13-18yrs</i>	<i>19+yrs</i>
3	44	61	6

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Evaluation Question:

Will you be using it in single-sex groups?

The majority of respondents indicated they intended to use the program in single sex groups however there was recognition of Rock and Water's relevance to both boys and girls and the ability of the program to be adapted for use with different groups. For example, comments included:

"Can see how it will benefit boys but the girls will love it too"

"I can think of many students, boys and girls, at my school who would benefit from this programme. It has great potential!"

"Can see huge value for young boys in participating in this programme but can also see same value for young girls. Will try to use with both."

Do you expect to work with other adults in delivering the course?

This indicates the viability of Rock and Water workshop content and ideas being transferred amongst colleagues. 79% of respondents did not intend to use the program in isolation.

Would you like to be kept informed by email group?

This question referred to the ability to link participants of Rock and Water training up throughout Australia to network and develop the work further.

89% of participants said YES they would like to join an email group to network with other participants and included their email addresses.

1 person indicated they did not have email access and would prefer to be included in the network via a postal address. 9 respondents did not answer this question. None of the respondents said they would not like to be informed via email.

Yes	No	Both	Undecided
56	22	6	11

Question:

Question:

Yes	No	Maybe	Unanswered
79	9	7	5

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Evaluation Question:

Question:

Would you like to be part of the ongoing documentation and evaluation of how the Rock and Water materials can be used. This would involve you keeping some record of your activities and outcomes and being part of an email discussion list.

45% of respondents did not answer this question, 52% said YES they would like to be a part of ongoing documentation and evaluation, 2% said NO, 1% MAYBE.

Respondents to this question were less willing to commit themselves.

How would you rate the seminar in terms of;

Fulfilling its content brief (consistency with what was promised) re: covering well key issues concerning "Teaching Boys, Developing Fine Men."

83% of respondents rated the seminar as EXCELLENT in terms of fulfilling this content brief. 15% rated it as GOOD and 2% of respondents did not answer this question.

Sample of Comments

- I have learnt more in three days about Boys' Education than ever before
- Good for understanding self control / emotions. Would have liked greater connectedness to the way boys learn
- The 'hands-on' practical nature of the course brings home the potential impact on students
- A very insightful approach that hopefully will permeate teaching methods overall in schools
- Lived up and surpassed my expectations
- Excellent – pacing, active, engaging. I learnt a large amount that is

personally valuable as well as for educating boys

- Content was clear, flowing, fun and authentic
- Fantastic! Beyond my expectation for scope and implementation potential

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Evaluation Question:

What would you say are the strengths of this Seminar? The most frequent strengths indicated included:

- The presenter - Freerk Ykema (enthusiasm, passion, embodies all he teaches, sincerity, energy, inspirational, presentation style, sharing of personal anecdotes)
- Balance between theory and practice
- Hands-on, practicality, physical nature

Sample of Comments

"It's great to see a program for boys education – every boy and educator of boys should participate in this program and then we would have a better world!"

“Raising awareness of boys (ie differences in attitudes, emotions, reaction processes etc.) How to educate and help boys to judge, control, reflect upon their emotions and deal with social problems/experiences.”

“Detailed information on how boys feel and behave. Acknowledgement of the constant negative messages boys receive. The physical contact exercises were designed to interest boys and include the physical competition they love so much. The greatest strength was to be taught by the designer of Rock and Water and have first hand teaching.”

Question:
Sample of Comments

- Some kind of ‘formal’ recognition towards post graduate studies would/could encourage participation and system support.
- Target school leadership at the local, district and central levels (Ministerial?!)
- Contact at ministerial level to be able to promote this system for all schools
- Videos of Freerk actually teaching groups. His language/mannerisms and voice are very unique and calming to an audience
- This program should be added to University Studies for school teachers to enable them to have a broad understanding of the boys they will teach upon graduating. Media coverage to create wider interest from the public would also be beneficial for developing further workshops
- Use it for fathers to help their sons. Target fathers and mothers.
- Hopefully this will become used in all Department school.
- I am an experienced qualitative researcher, keen on making large scale and long term research. (contact details provided)
- Take examples of successful groups to primary schools so that Principals will see the benefits (some doubt the value of the course)
- Videos in English better for kids understanding

Any suggestions for developing this work?

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Evaluation Question:

Are there other things that you hope will come out of participation in this seminar?

One the most common responses to this question was the impact of the seminar on participant’s personal/self development (personal growth, satisfaction, centring, belief in self) and the ability to apply principles outside the classroom ie to parenting, fathering,

Sample of comments

- A better understanding of boys’ needs
- Greater awareness of boys difficulties and some solutions
- My own improvement in delivering education
- Change in structure of delivery of teaching / teaching methods
- Understanding of boys learning
- Possible partnerships with schools running the Rock and Water Program in schools
- Encouraging school systems to look at how they cater for boys
- Convince school executive of need to address boys and the different approaches required – also to help girls understand how boys really think etc.

- Teaching method, awareness of boys development – anti-bullying, coping skills
- Enthused me to do more in this area
- Improved class management
- Reducing bullying, self awareness and self confidence of boys/girls
- Confidence and skill in teaching boys
- Networking – understanding of boys and men ‘To be a man’
- More self control and calmness. Able to interchange Rock and Water approaches in the classroom
- Assist our boys (and girls) to become REAL people for themselves and others
- Development of further skills to be used in teaching of students with emotional disturbances
- Helping to develop the way children relate to each other in a more positive way
- Deeper understanding of the many issues associated with successfully educating boys in school

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Evaluation Additional comments

- It was the BEST workshop I have attended because I gained on all levels – spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual
 - It was a fascinating, fun, challenging course.
 - I suggested earlier post graduate recognition – ALL teachers need this
- it should be in pre-service training!
- For years I've worked with programs with similar aims but this one gives me a great feeling of confidence that the goals are achievable, where other programs seemed less so. The physical and practical nature of the activities are excellent for boys and the theory behind it makes sense.
 - I would happily recommend this seminar to anyone working with young people
 - Thanks for the opportunity – I can use this in school
 - I see this program being extremely beneficial to the boys in my area
 - I would recommend giving info on how to implement such programs school-wide. The program is excellent but it may be difficult to motivate other teachers to come on board without Freerk's spirit, passion and knowledge. And schools can't afford to send ALL their teachers onto a 3 day program. Thankyou
 - I hope this program will bring about a small revolution in teaching methods. At the very least it will help those boys (and girls) having real problems with schooling at present
 - Very empowering seminar. I feel better in myself and more able to deal with the difficult boys in my school. Thankyou for your help and contagious enthusiasm
 - As teachers, we are very aware of the annoying/destructive behaviours of boys, but before now, I had only my own perceptions of why this was. Now, it will be easier for me to understand/accept and encourage boys to reach their full potential in living productive, happy lives
 - This course responds to a need within our schools where boys are expected to behave like girls in the learning environment. Provides an excellent tool for helping young men achieve greater success and self awareness.
 - It is a very worthwhile program and all teachers should be encouraged to participate to give them a clearer insight into boys' education
 - Learnt a lot about why boys behave as they do and strategies to help direct / develop their abilities to control themselves and to become a man

- *In the mixed group it showed me the importance of my own actions as a teacher especially when disciplining children – also the need for physical activity in the learning process*

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Evaluation

Additional comments cont...

- *So, so relevant for kids in today's society!! They need guidance, boundaries, rules to live by. They are not the centre of the world, but they have to be helped to live in it. (Many parents don't know what to do in this regard)*
- *I've been to about 50 in-services in my teaching so far and this is the BEST one I have been to. I have got heaps of activities to use with kids and heaps of worthwhile conflict resolution techniques. Thank you*
- *The best training course I have attended*
- *In service courses that practice what they preach are rare. It was very reassuring to know that there are courses such as this, that deliver content so usefully*
- *Yes, Yes, Yes!! What a great program for the boys of this world!*
- *Fantastic program and extremely beneficial in the education of both boys and girls. Hopefully, with increased awareness we will begin to see some improvement in today's society. It is great to see somebody is taking notice of today's problems and is developing a way to combat them. Thankyou!*
- *I was concerned about the teaching of self defence and the use of techniques that could be seen as 'aggressive' however the philosophy behind the program gives it credence. Excellent!!*
- *I felt privileged to be taught by Freerk Ykema as he has designed this fantastic program and delivers it with such passion. I feel this man is changing the view of teachers worldwide on how to handle the boys of the world. This program is a modern day approach and is well needed in all schools as this is where boys spend 6hrs per day 5 days a week and during these hours they receive many messages that determine how they view themselves outside the family home.*
- *It was wonderful to get 'permission' to touch kids and be personal with them again – all the human, caring elements of teaching which the department is pushing out. AND my own self esteem and self awareness has grown immensely. Thankyou*
- *Thankyou for the opportunity to meet other people interested in our children. I feel very hopeful for our future. Thankyou again.*
- *Thankyou Freerk – a wonderful 3 days with many 'diamonds' for my school, my boys, my girls, my teachers, my school families but also myself!!!*
- *Enjoyable! Challenging! Looking forward to some implementation of program ideas at school level*
- *I was amazed at how empowered I felt after being more aware of simple techniques to centre and take control of my life. Best in-service ever! Greatly needed*
- *It is very difficult for girls during adolescence to know their path and identify feelings. Most important things people should know are in this program.*

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Evaluation

Additional comments cont...

- I take away a great feeling from this seminar. It is a great concept and I am excited as a teacher and as a mum by it. Thanks.
- The seminar exceeded all my expectations. It is a long time since I have been so excited about running groups with adolescents. **I would** rate this training as the most informative and innovative, that I have had the pleasure of attending. Congratulations to all involved. Can't wait for the advanced training!
- This feels like it could be one of the most significant Professional Development courses I have ever done. It gives me confidence to work with boys who are struggling with finding their confidence and their way. I hope it will help me to re-connect with those I have lost connection with and make new, lasting, important connections.
- Sometimes programs are presented but you don't feel that it is realistic or will work in real life – I felt that this WILL work and I am excited at the thought of being able to help the kids I teach (all boys!)
- ENERGETIC, INSPIRATIONAL, INTERESTING.
- I have thoroughly enjoyed the workshop in every way. I can see benefits for me on a personal front and for my school and community. Many thanks!
- I've been on many psychotherapeutic, drama and self development courses, but never have been intensely challenged and engaged as in Rock and Water. Deepest thanks to Freerk and all involved in his promotion and support.
- This will be a valuable tool for students but also is also useful for teachers in maintaining self control in a harsh environment
- Enjoyable, worthwhile, practical activities and strategies to implement at a school level. Thankyou
- A very fulfilling three days. I feel grounded and centred and feel as though I can now teach others to do the same.
- A wonderful in-service/seminar. A course that would not only help boys, but teachers, parents, etc. Finally something useful in improving experience of boys not only in school but also in life generally. By improving boys' experience everyone (boys and girls) benefit.
- This program should be part of every school's curriculum
- My aim is to in-service all my staff over the next five years

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School Programs

School Program Evaluations of Rock and Water

The majority of teachers who have been trained have implemented successful programs for boys or girls in Primary and Secondary schools or youth centres. There have been several small scale evaluations of these school programs. The recent first stage of the Boys' Lighthouse Schools Program provided funds for two evaluations of these programs

Case Study A

Rock and Water has been systematically implemented in the Central cluster of school in the Diocese of Maitland/Newcastle for a period of two years. Four key groups of stakeholders were surveyed;

- 154 Year 5 and 6 students
- 77 who completed the program in 2001
- 254 Year 7-10 students
- 45 teachers who had been trained and taught the program

Analysis of the evaluation data suggests that the Rock and Water program has made a difference to teachers and students in the Central cluster. What can be said with some degree of confidence is that the Rock and Water program has contributed to the achievement of intended outcomes (increased self control, self confidence, improved social skills, greater awareness of self and others and skills to respond to difficult situations) for both students and teachers with student achievement being sustained over the two years of the programs existence in the cluster. Furthermore, it is asserted that available evidence supports the notion that the Rock and Water program has enhanced the quality of the teaching and learning experiences within the cluster.

Case Study B

Stromlo High School in the ACT attempted to re-engage a group of Year 8 Boys, some of which were amongst the most difficult and dis-engaged boys in the school. They underwent a semester of work that combined Rock and Water, RAP (Resilient Adolescent Program) with some Global Classroom lessons.

Evaluations were completed by the boys following the program with the following observations of the boys made;

- Our boys have become more focused and aware of their responsibilities and learning potentials.
- They are more settled and able to concentrate more fully on their classroom tasks leading to a considerable decline in Semester 2 mid term assessments of 'showing concern'.
- Certain boys have recorded an increase in 'highly satisfactory' assessments.
- Disciplinary interventions have reduced and are now more controlled, reasonable and productive.
- The boys are more informed about their choices of behaviour and are aware of more options with regard to these choices.

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Mind Matters

Rock and Water is often run in conjunction with other programs in schools to enhance the self-esteem, self-control and self-confidence of both boys and girls. It can support and contribute to the aims of other school programs, and can be integrated into school curriculum in a number of ways.

Protective factors

From the Mind Matters booklets a number of factors have been identified as contributing to a persons ability to cope with the demands of every day living. Many of the factors are enhanced through the Rock and Water program. For example:

- *Handling demands of school* ▪ *Belief in own ability to cope* ▪ *Sense of control*
- *Individual disposition*

- *Support, belonging and role models* ▪ *Easy temperament*
- *Sense of personal efficacy*
- *Ability to learn from mistakes*

- *Spiritual beliefs/spirituality*
- *A caring and positive school environment* ▪ *Capacity to self-monitor*
- *Sense of purpose or mission in life*

Aspects of student alienation

Mind Matters identify four main elements causing student alienation.

1. **Powerlessness.** Rock and Water helps students identify and work towards achieving goals. It teaches the skills that enable students to control their reactions and lives and helps them to set and move towards realising their goals.
2. **Meaninglessness.** Rock and Water develops a sense of purpose and links the future with the present.
3. **Normlessness.** By bringing a balance to what is expected in school and society in general, Rock and Water helps provide a set of behaviour norms that the students can identify with.
4. **Social estrangement.** Rock and Water provides a safe environment for the students to work in. It develops opportunities for students to participate together and develop connections with others.

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***P*lace in the syllabus**

The aims of the Rock and Water Program are consistent with approved school curriculum. It sits comfortably within the health, personal development and physical development syllabi. Below are examples of congruence with the values and outcomes in the NSW K-6 & 7-10 PD/H/PE syllabus documents.

K-6

Values and Attitudes Outcomes A student

1. V1 Refers to a sense of their own worth and dignity;
2. V2 Respects the rights of others to hold different values and attitudes from
their own;

3. V3 Enjoys a sense of belonging;
4. V4 Increasingly accepts responsibility for personal and community health;
5. V5 Willingly participates in regular physical activity.

Skills Outcomes

Communicating

COS2.1 Uses a variety of ways to communicate with and within groups
COS3.3 Communicates confidently in a variety of situations

Decision Making

DMS2.2 Makes decisions as a group member and as an individual

DMS3.2 Makes informed decisions and accepts responsibility for consequences

Interacting

INS2.3 Makes positive contributions in group activities

INS3.3 Acts in ways that enhance the contribution of self and others in a range of

cooperative situations

Moving

MOS2.4 Displays a focus on quality of movement in applying movement skills to a variety of familiar and new situations

MOS3.4 Refines and applies movement skills creatively to a variety of challenging situations

Problem Solving

PSS2.5 Uses a range of problem solving strategies

PSS3.5 Suggests, considers and selects appropriate alternatives when resolving

Problems

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Place in the syllabus

Knowledge and Understanding Outcomes

Interpersonal relationships

IRS2.11 Describes how relationships with a range of people enhance wellbeing IRS3.11 Describes roles and responsibilities in developing and maintaining positive

relationships

Safe Living

SLS2.13 Discusses how safe practices promote personal wellbeing

SLS3.13 Describes safe practices that are appropriate to a range of situations and

environments

7-10 Outcomes

Strand 1: Self and relationships

4.2 Identifies and selects strategies that enhance their ability to cope and feel supported

1. 5.1 Analyses how they can support their own and others' sense of self
2. 5.2 Evaluates their capacity to reflect on and respond positively to challenges
3. 5.3 Analyses factors that contribute to positive, inclusive and satisfying

relationships

Strand 2: Movement skill and performance

5.5 Composes, performs and appraises movement in a variety of challenging contexts

Strand 3: Individual and community health

4.7 Identifies the consequences of risk behaviours and describes strategies to minimise harm

6. 5.6 Analyses attitudes, behaviours and consequences related to health issues affecting young people
7. 5.7 Analyses influences on health decision-making and develops strategies to promote health and safe behaviours

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School Programs

Skills that enhance learning in PDHPE

Communicating

4.11 Selects and uses communication skills and strategies clearly and coherently in a range of new and challenging situations

Decision-making

4.12 Assesses risk and social influences and reflects on personal experience to make informed decisions

Planning

4.15 Devises, applies and monitors plans to achieve short-term and long-term goals

Problem-solving

4.16.1 Clarifies the source and nature of problems and draws on personal skills and support networks to resolve them

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E *xercises*

Specific Rock and Water Exercises enable students to meet specific outcomes of the PDHPE syllabus. Below are some examples.

Standing Strong activities K-6 Outcomes

IRS2.11 Describes how relationships with a range of people enhance wellbeing

IRS3.11 Describes roles and responsibilities in developing and maintaining positive relationships

7-10 Outcomes

5.1 Analyses how they can support their own and others' sense of self

5.3 Analyses factors that contribute to positive, inclusive and satisfying relationships

Self Defence K-6 Outcomes

SLS2.13 Discusses how safe practices promote personal wellbeing

SLS3.13 Describes safe practices that are appropriate to a range of situations and environments

7-10 Outcomes

4.17 Clarifies the source and nature of problems and draws on personal skills and support networks to resolve them

5.2 Evaluates their capacity to reflect on and respond positively to challenges

Strength of Mental Rock

K-6 Outcomes

PSS3.5 Suggests, considers and selects appropriate alternatives when resolving problems

INS3.3 Acts in ways that enhance the contribution of self and others in a range of cooperative situations

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E *xercises 7-10 Outcomes*

4.2 Identifies and selects strategies that enhance their ability to cope and feel supported

5.1 Analyses how they can support their own and others' sense of self

Boundary Awareness K-6 Outcomes

COS2.1 Uses a variety of ways to communicate with and within groups

INS3.3 Acts in ways that enhance the contribution of self and others in a range of cooperative situations

7-10 Outcomes

4.11 Selects and uses communication skills and strategies clearly and coherently in a range of new and challenging situations

4.17 Clarifies the source and nature of problems and draws on personal skills and support networks to resolve them

Rock and Water in the Playground K-6 Outcomes

INS3.3 Acts in ways that enhance the contribution of self and others in a range of cooperative situations

PSS3.5 Suggests, considers and selects appropriate alternatives when resolving problems

7-10 Outcomes

4.11 Selects and uses communication skills and strategies clearly and coherently in a range of new and challenging situations

4.18 Clarifies the source and nature of problems and draws on personal skills and support networks to resolve them

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A*ppendix*

Rock and Water Evaluation Form