DRUMBEAT
Discovering Relationships Using Music, Beliefs, Emotions, Attitudes & Thoughts

The Holyoake DRUMBEAT program was designed to engage children and young people resistant to talk based approaches. The program uses hand drumming to foster improved levels of personal and social confidence and develop social skills.

DRUMBEAT is a fun program that uses analogies and metaphor to raise awareness in participants of the factors that support healthy relationships and in so doing supports a reduction in the social isolation that is commonly experienced by alienated young people.

DRUMBEAT involves up to 12 participants in 10 x 1.5 hour sessions with specific themes including self-responsibility, values, emotional expression, identity, peer pressure, harmony and teamwork. Through hand drumming, the program uses a framework of fun and experiential learning to draw participants’ attention to connections between their experiences in the drum circle, and their relationships in the wider community.

The DRUMBEAT program utilises 5 core elements to achieve its goals

1. Core Rhythms – Participants learn to play specific parts in harmony with each other leading to increased levels of focus and concentration as well as team work skills.
2. Rhythm Games – These promote fun and engagement and are often tied to analogies that prompt discussion on a social theme
3. Discussion – Opportunities to talk about the social themes of the program sessions from a personal perspective, increasing the relevance of the program to participant’s lives and leading to personal insight and personal growth.
4. Improvisation – Participants are encouraged to explore their own creativity and develop their own rhythms. This promotes self- efficacy and supports creative ways of problem solving.
5. Performance – This provides recognition of achievement, connection to community & demonstrates the potential of each individual.

The basic format for the DRUMBEAT program is 10 sessions over ten weeks. Each session is 1.5 hours in length. The program finishes with a public performance.

DRUMBEAT is designed for small groups – maximum of 12 participants

DRUMBEAT is primarily used by organisations and schools working with alienated or socially dislocated individuals. With adaptation the age range extends from 9 -12 years old through to adult. Most DRUMBEAT programs are run in upper primary and secondary schools.

DRUMBEAT was originally designed to engage Aboriginal youth and the learning framework replicates the experiential model of traditional Aboriginal cultural learning. The DRUMBEAT program has also been utilised by schools and organisations across Australia working with young people with experiences as a refugee.

DRUMBEAT draws on a Social Learning Theory to explore relationship issues with the social context recognised as a key influence on behaviour. The program uses experiential group work involving action, movement and activity which form the core of the process using group drumming and opportunities for the facilitator to observe participants in the social setting of the small group. The reflection that arises through this process then draws on
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approaches to enable participants to make the links between thoughts, actions and emotions. In the DRUMBEAT program, discussions are drawn from analogies taken from the drum circle which promote introspection and self-awareness around the relationship themes of the session or the activities and actions displayed by the participants themselves.

Expected Outcomes for Parents/ Carers:
- Improved relational connection with their child
- Stronger family relationships

Expected Outcomes for Children;
- Increase in the child’s experience of safety
- Reduction in the child’s trauma based behaviours
- Increased ability to form and or maintain positive relationships including improved relationships with family, peers and others.
- Improvement in social problem solving skills and decision making and adaptability.
- Improved family functioning
- Improved wellbeing

RANT has carefully selected the DRUMBEAT program with full recognition and acknowledgement of the needs of the community and the target group in Katherine Region. The following points demonstrate how the project proposed encompasses culture and community strengths in its design and implementation:

- **Understand the impact of colonisation and intergenerational trauma and grief.** RANT will employ staff with extensive training and professional development in anti-oppressive, trauma-informed social work practice and experience working alongside Indigenous peoples of different backgrounds and life experience in Australia.
- **Experiential model of traditional Aboriginal learning.** DRUMBEAT was originally designed to engage Aboriginal youth and the learning framework replicates the experiential model of traditional Aboriginal cultural learning.
- **Developed to address issues in the local community**
  Our interest in the provision of the DRUMBEAT program originally grew out of the expressed concerns of local Aboriginal parents at the gaps in their understanding of their children’s and their own behaviour and agency to make a difference.
- **Combine Western Knowledge/Methods with Aboriginal Knowledge/ Methods.**
  Delivery of DRUMBEAT will combine the culturally-sensitive Western therapeutic methodologies such as mindfulness, reflection and strength based practices, brain science and neurobiology with traditional healing knowledge and practices shared by the Aboriginal Child and Family Support Workers (ACFSW) and the parents who are attending the program.
- **Two-way teaching and learning.** DRUMBEAT program, with a strength based approach will encourage an educational approach in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are part of an equal and genuine cultural exchange. This exchange will be encourage and pursued within the counsellor/educator and ACFSW’s relationship and within the workers and parent participants’ relationship.
- **Gender specific groups.** DRUMBEAT will be delivered in a format that is acknowledging of the importance of cultural preferences and protocol with regard to gender and family kinship systems.
- **Local employment.** Staff to be recruited locally.

The DRUMBEAT program has been assessed by AIFS as having a sufficient evidence base to be considered approved for use as an evidenced-based program under the requirement for Communities for Children Facilitating Partners. As such, one or more evaluations of the DRUMBEAT program have been conducted (with a minimum total of 20 participants) that has established the program as having positive benefits for the target group, and a report is available. [https://apps.aifs.gov.au/cfca/guidebook/programs](https://apps.aifs.gov.au/cfca/guidebook/programs)