

EDITORIAL

I am delighted to introduce myself as the incoming Editor-in-Chief. I have worked in schools and community settings supporting the mental health of young people and their families for two and a half decades and for much of that time I have worked in roles tasked with training the next generation of psychologists and counsellors, both in Australia and UK. I am privileged to follow in the footsteps of our esteemed past Editor, Professor Marilyn Campbell who has worked tirelessly to give the journal its excellent reputation for disseminating quality research on educational and psychological topics of interest to school psychologists and counsellors, globally.

With one eye in the rear-view mirror and another on the road ahead we know the global pandemic has left valuable lessons for schools in terms of staff and student wellbeing. Amidst the success stories of how schools across the world stepped up to the demands of digital delivery, we have seen increased need to attend to the mental health and wellbeing of school counsellors, teachers, and students. We start this issue with a timely reminder about self-care, specifically that the practice of mindfulness can reduce burnout and build resilience. Authors Michelle Neumann and Sarah Tillott provide some practical techniques to equip teachers with coping strategies in these uncertain times. While on the theme of mindfulness, the next paper by Maedeh Heidary, Touraj Hashemi Nosrat Abad and Wolfgang Linden describes a study with boys aged 6- to 8-years, comparing externalising behaviours before and after a mindfulness-based intervention. They showed weekly 1-hr mindfulness sessions for 2-months reduced aggression and rule-breaking in the intervention-group relative to controls.

Some may know the adage '*it takes a village to raise a child*'. The next five papers take a deep dive into the factors associated with success at school and beyond. The article by Sajjad Basharpour, Fazeleh Heidari, Mohammad Narimani and Usha Barahmand examined the relationship between school adjustment, engagement and self-perceived academic ability in 5th and 6th grade children. Their sophisticated statistical modelling showed that coherent family systems and high social acceptability of students was linked to better school adjustment both directly and indirectly through school engagement and academic self-concept. They suggest schools collaborate with parents to maximise school adjustment and recommend activities such as school-based parenting programs, school-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activities to support students who are vulnerable to adjustment difficulties. Next, Laura Verdugo and Yolanda Sánchez-Sandoval bring us an interesting study where they tested a model suggesting that psychological and social adjustment predicts future life expectations in adolescents. They found support for their model in a large sample of 11–15-year-olds and noted future expectations to be a critical protective factor for healthy psycho-social development in adolescence. They suggest that thinking about the future influences current behaviour and choices. The article by Leila Ghahremani, Mohammad Hossein Kaveh, Hadi Tehrani, Arezoo Orooji and Alireza Jafari investigated factors associated with positive thinking in adolescent boys. Premised on the Theory of Planned Behaviour the authors developed (and validated) a questionnaire to reveal that attitude (about positive thinking) is the biggest predictor of intention to think positively. Authors Gökmen Arslan, Faramarz Asanjarani, Saeede Bakhtiari and Fatemeh Hajkhodadadi present the validation of a School Belongingness Scale. This scale will go some way to assist school psychologists and counsellors to identify student psychosocial and emotional difficulties associated with poor school belonging and provide a robust tool for researchers. The following paper by Mehmet Özcan provides a well-timed reminder about the factors contributing to student absenteeism. Poor academic outcomes, parental involvement, school climate, inflexible school schedules, and health and social issues were the biggest influences. Once again increasing family involvement was a key message.

The next four papers are undoubtedly closer to home as they examine factors related to school counsellors themselves. The study by Cathy Bettman and Alexander Digiacommo provides an update on the school counselling profession in Australia. They describe the complexities of the role, relationship tensions between stakeholders and the need to self-advocate as the major challenges. Hatice İrem Özteke Kozan undertook a phenomenological exploration of self-efficacy in school counsellors. Improved skills with counselling, assessment, groups and resistant students were believed to enhance self-efficacy. Abdulkadir Haktanir's quantitative study made similar recommendations for improving self-efficacy. It stands to reason if you are good at the role, you probably know and believe you are!

The final paper provides a contemporary approach for your professional tool bag. Sarah Tillott, Noelene Weatherby-Fell, Phil Pearson and Michelle Neumann describe the efficacy of storytelling to develop resilience in primary-school children.

A slightly bigger issue and hopefully one not to disappoint.

Happy reading and take care.

Elizabeth Edwards PhD
Editor-in-Chief