

LEARNER GUIDE

Unit 5 – Motivate And Engage



RSAS Training Strategy Project 2018

Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)



A message from
our CEO, Sally
Sinclair.

Dear colleague

Welcome to the NESAs Remote School Attendance Strategy Training Project. We recognise the importance of the role that you are doing and we are committed to supporting you throughout this role with a range of training offerings.

We appreciate the positive impact of your role within your local community and the opportunities you create every day by supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to engage in school. We also understand that your role will be both rewarding and challenging, and we are confident that the training we are offering will assist you further in your role.

NESAs RSAS Training Strategy Project will involve a blended training approach that includes the following:

- Face-to-face forums with each forum running for three days in your local community
- Online training that will offer short courses that you are able to select
- Individual coaching and mentoring throughout your training
- The option to complete accredited units that will count towards a formal qualification

Our team are here to support you and we are available if you have any questions about this programme or the training you are completing. Our office number is (02) 9119 3090 and our email address is rsas@nesa.com.au. We are available Monday – Friday between 9.00-5.00pm (Sydney time) - please feel free to give us a call or pop us a line; we are more than happy to discuss any questions you may have.

We wish you all the best in this important role and we look forward to working with you throughout this project.

Yours sincerely

Sally Sinclair
CEO

Motive and Engage

Objectives

Assist RSAS workers in developing and understanding engagement strategies to motivate children to attend school. Outline a range of specialised techniques including the use of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and behaviour modification techniques while exploring the value of networking and relationship mapping with schools, community and families.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the unit, learners will be able to:

- Identify how to develop strategies to effectively motivate and engage children and young people
- Understand process in how to engage broader stakeholders – families, local community and other services
- Identify relevant issues and practices relating to engaging and motivating
- Identify a range of stakeholders within the local community and other programs that will help motivate and engage participants

Resources

The resources provided are a Learner Guide, Workbook and Trainer Guide.

This Learner Guide provides a resource to support the activities in the Unit 8 Workbook. It is designed to help trainers, RSAS officers and members of the community better understand how to work effectively with others.



This icon represents action when an individual task needs to be completed. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 5 Workbook



This icon represents action when a task is to be completed as a group. You will find instructions on how to complete these tasks in the Unit 5 Workbook

Part 1: What causes lack of motivation?

Let's start with why kids don't want to go to school. There are a number of reasons for this, but the most common reasons are:

Not having their basic needs met.

If you have completed *Unit 2: Developing our children and young people*, you will remember there is a hierarchy of needs that we all have as humans, starting with the need for food, water, shelter and safety, and moving up to higher level needs such feeling we belong.

If our kids are not having these needs met, they are not going to feel motivated about going to school.

Low self-esteem

Kids who have a poor self-image avoid activities that they think are beyond their capabilities. Even if they can actually complete a task, these students engage in self-defeating behavior to protect the little self-worth they do possess. For them, it is better not to try, or to procrastinate rather than risk trying, failing, and feeling even worse about themselves.

Lack of support at home

The home environment shapes our initial attitudes towards learning. In a home where curiosity, questions, and exploration are encouraged, kids are given the message that education is worthwhile and satisfying. On the other hand, in a home where learning is not encouraged, children are given the message that education is of little value and that they lack the competency and ability to learn.

Low expectations in the classroom

Students mirror their teachers' attitudes. If teachers believe that their students can learn, their students are more likely to trust in themselves and their abilities. On the other hand, if teachers take the stance that they are the source of all knowledge and that their students are incompetent, their students are more apt to tune out, stop trying, and drop out or skip school.

Pressure

Many unmotivated students are simply responding negatively to pressure. Whether the tension is perceived or real, these kids rely on defence mechanisms to protect themselves. Through procrastination or avoidance, they are trying to escape from their fears of failure and inadequacy. In time, they come to accept the consequences of their behaviour, so they appear nonchalant and composed, even as the pressure they are trying to dodge mounts.



Activity 1: Discussion

Discuss what you see as the main reasons for lack of motivation and engagement among the kids in your community.

What are the key challenges for you in your RSAS role?

Part 2: Motivating Kids to Attend School

Students are more likely to engage in learning when they

- See **value** in what they're learning
- Perceive that the environment is **supportive**
- Believe that doing **specific things** will bring about success
- Believe they can be **successful**

This is where you can help.

1. Showing that Learning is Valuable

Lots of kids may wonder why they should bother going to school when most of the people around them haven't finished school. It is a big help if we can identify more positive role models for them. Consider Elijah Douglas's story.

Elijah Douglas's Story

Elijah Douglas of Doomadgee set a goal to get a good education and return to his community with a qualification to work with his people.

"School is very important. A lot of our people in communities are going through struggles. It's important that Indigenous people get a good education so that they can be employed and help build our communities and make them stronger," Elijah said.

Elijah is keen to do just that. As well as full time study, he is doing work experience at a local health clinic each week to gain hands on experience, which he can use back in community.

"I want to get experience working in health so that in the future I can promote health, education and employment in Aboriginal communities, not just in Doomadgee but in communities all over Australia", Elijah said.

Spinifex State College teacher Greg Hanrahan has seen Elijah overcome the pressure of being a year 12 student and suffering homesickness to becoming a strong leader.

"It's easy to identify the people who've got a spark and he's certainly one of those. As soon as I gave him opportunities to develop programmes at the school alongside other students, he put together a cultural group. This encouraged others to tell cultural stories through dance or plays, with Elijah leading the process. He also taught students



"I want to promote health, education and employment in Aboriginal Communities."

how to make didges and decorate them traditionally. He's been a real leader by encouraging people to embrace their traditional practices," Greg said.

Elijah has already achieved a lot. He is Indigenous school captain and an inspirational role model for other Indigenous students. He has written a fantasy book and is currently writing another book about Aboriginal history and the Dreamtime.

In 2013, Elijah was selected by the Premier's Anzac Award Committee as one of five Queensland students to travel to Gallipoli and the Western Front for Anzac Day ceremonies.

Source: <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/news-and-media/stories/elijah-douglas-doomadgee-gallipoli>

Maybe your kids haven't heard of Elijah before, but they will have heard of these people who are great role models:

Stan Grant, a Wiradjuri man is one of Australia's top journalists. He studied for his career at the Australian National University.

Linda Burney, one of our foremost politicians was the first Aboriginal graduate from Mitchell College of Advanced Education.

Mark Ella, one of the best Rugby Union players Australia has ever seen learnt to play Rugby Union at school. After his sports career he studied law and has said he owes much of what he has achieved to his education.

"We always valued our education and mum and dad were pretty strict on that," Mark said.

"Growing up in a family of 12 children, we spent every day at school, our parents knew that it was important that we got a good education and it's paid off.

"You have got to realise just what a good education can do for you and what opportunities it gives you. You just can't afford not to be educated to the best of your ability.

"A good education gives people independence. They can buy their own car, they can buy their own house, they can travel the world. As long as you work

hard and use the education you have got to get a good job, you can open up so many opportunities as you get older.”¹

Even more powerful than these role models are role models that kids see around them every day.



Activity 2: Community Role Models.

Who in your local community are good role models for your kids. Discuss how you can use these role models to help encourage better school attendance.

1. Building a Supportive Environment

There are many ways RSAS officers can encourage better school attendance. Consider the following things that are easy to do:

- Be cheerful. Collect funny jokes and stories to tell your kids on the way to school so they look forward to the experience and see it as fun. Encourage them to find humour around them. There is nothing better than a good long laugh to prepare us for the day ahead.
- Be fair. Kids will argue but try not to take sides and treat every kid under your care in the same way.
- Get to know your kids. Create relationships with them.
- Promote social exchanges for learning among your kids so they learn from each other. Encourage them to have after school homework dates. Create your own spelling bee or general knowledge quiz that you can do on the way to or from school. Have some fun and give out little prizes.
- Make sure they know that you are interested in their success and are available to support them. Provide ways for them to get help if they need it.



Be Cheerful.

¹ See: <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/ella-family-success-thanks-to-education>

2. Become a mentor by setting high expectations and providing guidance

We are doing our kids a favour when we set higher expectations of attendance and behaviour, and don't allow those expectations to slip because of the circumstances. The following story of one of the Stolen Generation shows this.

You Behave the Way People Expect You to Behave

Like many of our mob, my first label was 'abandoned', then 'ward of the State' which was the start of a journey that for many years I felt wasn't mine to have.

More fitting words would be 'stolen' and 'assimilation' though - as sad as my story may be - I wouldn't change a thing, even if I could today, because now it's my story and it's me who is steering the canoe.

Yeah, I spent a lot of my life wallowing in self-pity, blaming everyone else and everything else for the way I was - only a few years ago until I realised that this is what they wanted.

The courts, once they heard my story, just said it was expected that I turned out the way I did. Instead of teaching me to take responsibility for my actions, I was taught to blame and be ashamed of my Aboriginality, which in many ways paralysed me and prevented me from finding the strength and courage to find my own way home.

Excerpt from an anonymous survivor of the Stolen Generation
Source:

<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/stolen-generations-stories#ixzz45DZkhRub>

Setting high expectations means you:

- provide standards for kids to live up to
- explain to them what they need to do to meet these standards
- mentor them and provide guidance
- are consistent in your expectations
- show them you care

Miyagi in the film, “The Karate Kid” is a fine example of a mentor. It is an excellent film to watch if you would like to become a better mentor.



“The Karate Kid” is an excellent film to watch for mentorship.

3. Helping Kids Believe That They Can Be Successful



Everyone fails along the way to success. But some people have a real fear of failing and sometimes failure is felt as something awful.

You can help your kids understand that failure is just feedback, and if they learn from it they will do better next time. There is nothing more destructive of our opportunities than learning to be helpless as the Elephant Rope Story shows.

The Elephant Rope Story

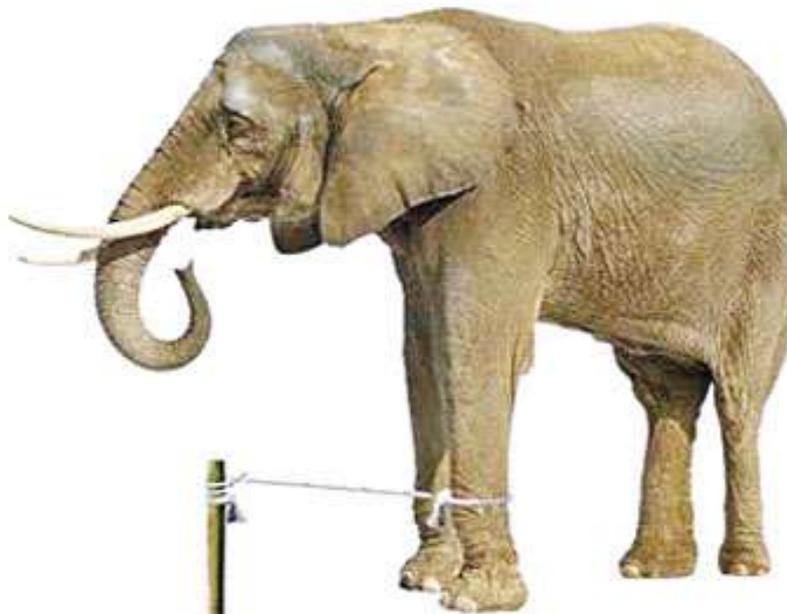
As a man was passing the elephants, he suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, break away from their bonds but for some reason, they did not.

He saw a trainer nearby and asked why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away. "Well," trainer said, "when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free."

The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn't, they were stuck right where they were.

Like the elephants, how many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before?

Failure is part of learning; we should never give up the struggle in life. If you can help your kids see this through telling them stories like the Elephant Rope story or stories of heroes that have succeeded after failing many times, this can help them see failure in a different way.



4. Encouraging Troubled Kids

Some kids will have more problems than others. Some will have a world of trouble to cope with including family violence; parents who are absent; grog or drugs; being in trouble with the police; and having learning difficulties. Some may be depressed; feel helpless or angry about this.

This is a difficult situation but it is one that you can help with.

The first thing to remember is that no matter how bad the things are that happen to us, we will only become a victim if we allow ourselves to sink into helplessness. If we remain positive and look for ways of improving our situation we can never become a victim.



“We only become a victim if we allow ourselves to.”

Stories of people who have survived dreadful conditions and were able to raise above them show how we are all able to stay optimistic and learn resilience. Listening to some of their stories provides an insight into how we can motivate our more troubled kids.



Activity 3: A Hero's Story

Many heroes fail before they finally succeed. What's your favourite story of failure leading to success?

Share it with the group. What do you learn from this story?



Part 3: Some special techniques

1. Using Positive Language

We need to be very persuasive to encourage kids to attend school and do their best there. The Science of NLP helps us adjust our language to be more persuasive.

NLP is short for Neuro-linguistic Programming. It is all about using language in a way that changes thinking and behaviour. In this way we can weed out negative thinking.

If we want to set higher expectations for our children we would start by saying:

“All my kids make a big effort at school. You will too {insert name}. Won’t you? Yes. All the time we would look at the kids and nod our head, smiling.”²

If they are late for school, we might say:

“It’s great to see you. We all try to be on time. What can I do to help you be ready on time tomorrow?”

We choose our words carefully, so that we use only positive words and encourage agreement.

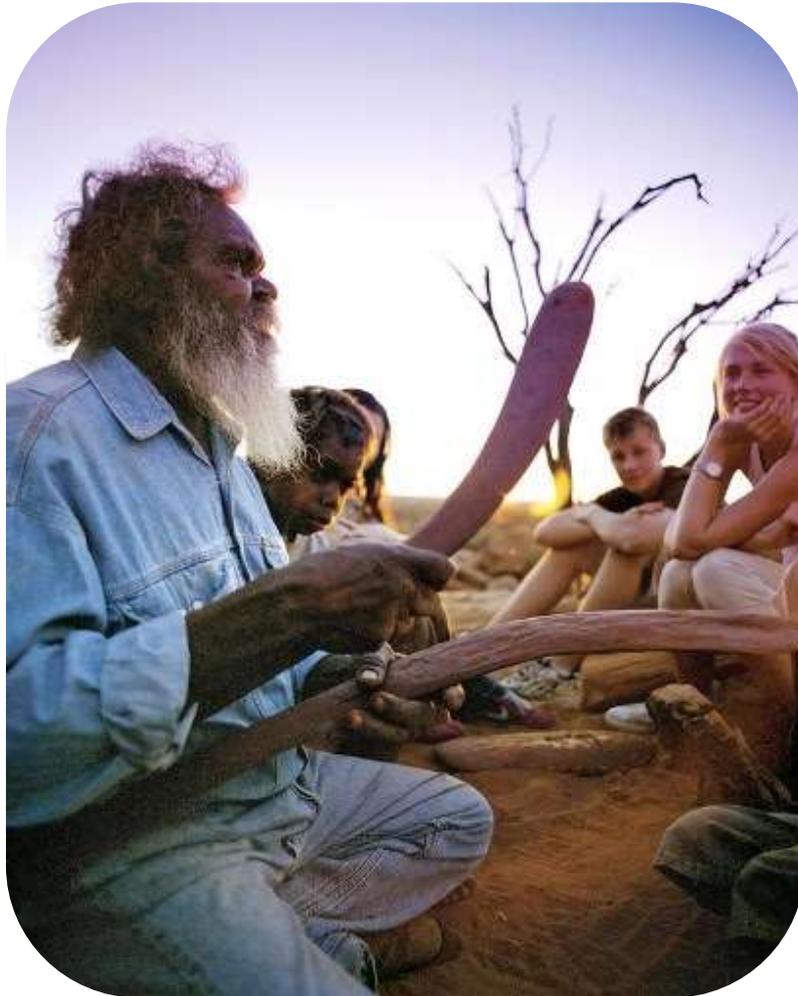
2. Telling Stories

Stories are very powerful. Engaging stories are hypnotic and help us connect to our culture and people. We know where culture is strong, so too is self-esteem and motivation.

² Mackie, I and MacLennan G (2015), *Nudge for Schools: Helping Your Students Choose Success*, Freemantle W.A., Vivid Publishing p.192



Activity 4: Make a list of the stories you know that you can use to motivate kids.



Tourism Australia: <http://www.tourism.australia.com/industry-advice/aboriginal-australia.aspx>

1. Showing Empathy and Teaching Resilience

Empathy means putting yourself in another person's shoes. Everyone needs to feel people understand their problems. However, empathy doesn't mean sinking into a state of going over and over how bad a situation is.

Every day we face challenges. We can choose to get temporarily upset, do something about it, and get over it, or we can "awfulise" it or "catastrophise" it. If we awfulise the normal frustrations of life, we sink into a state of helplessness and depression. This is not something we want for ourselves or our kids.



Activity 5: Role Play

Consider the following situation

Ben has a lot of problems at home. He has been in trouble with the police and at school. He is very defiant most of the time. However you have formed a good relationship with him. One afternoon he comes out of school swearing and angry. He was passed over for a place on the school representative football team. The coach has told him it is because of his attitude and if he changes his attitude, he'll reconsider.

Ben says he is being disrespected for all the work he has done in training and he is going to leave school and "get back" at that man.

How could you show empathy and help this student become more resilient so they don't awfulise this situation?

What would you say to Ben that would help him get over this?

Choose a partner and practice by role playing the situation.

Part 4: Community Engagement

Sometimes you need to engage parents and the broader community to achieve your goals. For example, engaging parents and guardians in what is happening at the school is important to maintain the motivation of their kids. Engaging the teachers and the principal in the RSAS program is important so that you are all working towards the same goals.

You can engage stakeholders formally or informally.

Informal engagement may mean visiting a family for a chat; talking over issues with an elder, or simply having a conversation in the street. There is usually no preparation for this sort of engagement, nor is there meant to be. This is often a way of developing good relations, keeping people informed, and building trust.

Formal engagement includes a number of different activities.

- a) **Meetings** are one of the most common forms of formal engagement. You may ask to have a meeting with a teacher, the principal of the school, the local constable, the district nurse or someone else in the community who you work with from time to time. When a meeting is formal, it is wise to prepare for it and let the person know what it is you would like to talk to them about. They may need time to get information together or give the issue some thought.
- b) **Consultation** is slightly different to meetings. This is where you may want to discuss a particular problem or decision with a number of people. It is a good idea to consult with the community if you have to make an important decision that will affect a lot of people. You might ask for a meeting with the group all at once, or individually. After consulting with them, it is courteous to let them know what is happening next.

Setting a time and keeping to it is important when we engage formally. Depending on the kind of meeting, it is also a good idea to keep notes or minutes of the meeting that you can refer back to.

Not all communication needs to be face to face, nor is that always possible.

- Telephone, email and Face-Time (if available) are very common ways of engaging.
- Letters are not so common as they used to be, though a card is always welcome.

- However beware of texting! This form of communication is short and sharp and not the best way to engage people, though it is excellent for making appointments, letting people know you are going to be late etc.

Make sure the medium you use for communication is always the most appropriate.



Activity 6:

Think of three different people in your community you need to or would like to engage with. Some may be people who are not yet supportive of RSAS. Some may be people who can help you.

Identify the best way of engaging them.

Part 5: Programs That Are Available to Help

There are many programs apart from the RSAS program that are designed to encourage Indigenous children to get a good education and help kids in trouble. Some are run by the Federal Government, some through the State Governments, and some by community groups.

For example:

- Abstudy provides financial support for indigenous students who need to leave home to study. Make a free call on 1800 132 317
- The Rotary Club of Central Queensland offers scholarships to Indigenous students studying health related courses at university.
- The Smith Family runs an Indigenous Youth Leadership program. For general information contact 1300 326 459
- Kids Helpline helps kids in any kind of trouble, or those who just want to talk. A counsellor can be contacted on free call 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline provides crisis support and suicide prevention and can be contacted on 13 11 14
- The Police and Ambulance can be contacted in the event of an emergency on 000



Activity 7:

Make a list of the programs and support that are available within your community that could help you in your role. Make sure you add contact details or ways of finding more information about them.



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