

## **Editorial**

In a paper we wrote a couple of years ago we argued that the worldwide shift away from collectivist values and the move towards individualism, which locates self-actualisation as the pinnacle of human achievement, has led to serious problems for children and young people (Cooper and Cefai, 2009). The psychologist Oliver James (2007) refers to this excessive individualism among adults as ‘affluenza’, which he equates to a disease characterised by an obsessive, but hopeless pursuit of fulfillment through rampant materialism and the urge to economic consumption and display. He argues that ‘affluenza’ distorts values to the extent that human qualities such as empathy, kindness and love for others become sidelined. Layard and Dunn (2009) cite this individual pursuit of private interest and success as one of the major causes of problems that contribute to the social, emotional and behavioural difficulties manifested by children and young people, including bullying, anxiety and depression. They refer to evidence showing the widening gap between adults and children in terms of the amount of time that children spend with adults as opposed to with their peers. By the age of 11 or 12, children are spending, on average, approximately 5 per cent of their leisure time in adult company and over 50 per cent of this time with peers. As a result, parents and carers are likely to have far less influence on the lives of children than was the case in earlier generations. Rutter and Smith (1995) highlight this phenomenon as a possible cause of the increased incidence of a range of psychosocial disorders in young people in the past decades such as delinquency, acting-out and acting-in disorders, particularly in the more individualistic societies of the world. At the extreme end of the continuum of mental health difficulties is the problem of suicide, which is the second leading cause of death in the 15-19 age group throughout the world and is a problem which continues to increase (WHO, 2012). The following papers, particularly the first one, touch on some of these issues.

The first paper in this edition is a relatively extensive study with over 7000 young people on the influence of parents on adolescents’ antisocial beliefs. Dane and colleagues (Canada) examined how two broad dimensions of parenting, namely parental monitoring (control) and parent-adolescent attachment (relationship), impacted adolescents’ beliefs about anti-social behaviour. They found that the two aspects of parenting were associated with adolescent beliefs about antisocial behaviour, and that also they had a complementary role, with a secure attachment relationship being associated with greater parental monitoring knowledge, which in turn is linked with a lower tolerance for antisocial behaviour. This relationship however, is moderated by the young adolescents’ own characteristics, such as age, gender and temperament.

In the second paper, Zhou and Ee (Singapore) discuss the development of a social and emotional competence questionnaire based on the five core areas of social and emotional learning, namely self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management and responsible decision-making. The paper describes a series of studies which sought to establish the reliability and validity of the instrument as a measure of social and emotional learning in children and young people. In the third paper, Fayombo (Barbados) presents a study on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement amongst students at the University of West Indies, Barbados. The author suggests that emotional intelligence components such as attending to emotion, negative expressivity, positive expressivity and empathic concern, predict academic achievement amongst university students.

As a journal targeting both researchers and practitioners in emotional education, occasionally we seek to publish papers based on practitioners' own theory development in relation to practice. In the fourth paper, Hughes (UK) proposes a model on how education and training may prepare students with the knowledge and skills for collaborative working through interprofessional education. The model draws on adult learning theory and activity theory to frame its direction, suggesting ways interprofessional education can be used to engage practitioners from different disciplines to gain insight into the understanding of the wider issues of social, emotional and behaviour difficulties and the roles and responsibilities of the other professions involved.

In this edition we are pleased to welcome the journal's new book reviews editorial team, consisting of Paul Bartolo (University of Malta), Paul Downes (St Patrick's College, Ireland) and Maria Poulou (Thessaloniki University, Greece). At the same time we would like to express our thanks and gratitude to Neil Humphrey, the outgoing book reviews editor, for his invaluable service over the past years.

The call for papers for the special issue on positive education is being extended to 31st December 2012. The special issue, guest edited by Prof Jane Gillham, will be published in November 2013.

Finally a reminder of the present call for papers for the fourth ENSEC Conference, *Social and Emotional Competence in a Changing World*, held at the University in Zagreb in July 2013. For further details on submission and registration please visit the conference website at:

<http://www.quovadis.hr/ensec2013/>

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## References

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