



# RESILIENCE IN OUR TEENS™ (RIOT) PROJECT

A WHOLE-SCHOOL COMMUNITY APPROACH  
TO REDUCE ANXIETY AND BUILD RESILIENCE

## OVERVIEW

The RIOT, Whole-School project takes a wrap around approach to help teenagers learn skills to manage anxiety and build resilience by engaging the significant adults in their life in training.

The project is consistent with the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework (ASWF) and includes:

- Providing training and resource for implementation coaches, teachers and principals to ensure they always have access to the latest research and resilience practices available to them.
- Helping schools connect with their communities to ensure there is a whole-of-school cultural change to addressing anxiety, improving school attendance and improving student engagement and performance.

In its teacher format, the RIOT project assists educators to identify and to manage student anxiety. Elements of the curriculum include:

- Noting the differences between anxiety disorders and normal anxiety,
- Which family and teacher management behaviours are correlated with worsening anxiety,
- How different types of anxiety respond to different treatments,
- How the adults in the teen's environment can assist young people to become mentally stronger,
- The types of conversational interventions teachers can use facilitate resilience-thinking skills and which need to be formally taught (e.g., arousal reduction and interrupting techniques).

The project is taught as a cultural change program running over a 12 month period.

### Project costs & training timeline:

The Whole-School Resilience In Our Teens (RIOT) program costs between \$14,999 and \$24,999 and is determined by your school size.

RIOT Champion training will take place on two consecutive days, in the term before your whole school training.

The whole of school staff training to take place at a time convenient to your school and presenter availability.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Training of RIOT Champions (up to 10 in one school) on set dates.
- Full day training of all staff – either one day or equivalent using flexible delivery options.
- Free and discounted parent tickets to the RIOT interactive parent webinar – includes anxiety pre-screening test, and a parent workbook mailed to parents.
- A curated series of research articles and school resources to engage with your parent community.
- A completed sample theory of change template for you to tailor to your own school.
- Background documents: role descriptions, barriers to implementation lesson plans for years 7-12.
- Two important books on anxiety and behaviour change for your RIOT Champion team.
- Support to design simple research – selection of developed hypotheses to be tested - and suggested before and after testing instruments
- Travel and accommodation costs of trainer for the teacher training.
- Ongoing scheduled support meetings for your RIOT Champions over a 12 month period.

### RIOT Champion job role:

- Attend training for RIOT Champions.
- Prepare staff for the program prior to the all staff training day.
- Organise all staff to attend a training day for teachers and teachers' aides with ParentsShop.
- Amend school policies to include a 'Have a Go' culture and ensure new teachers are trained in the Resilience In Our Teens ethos.
- Enlist the cooperation of the local P&C.
- Advertise training of parents.
- Ensure that teachers see it is their responsibility to be each teen's anxiety coach.
- Inspire the entire school community but especially teachers and teachers' aides to work with one another to ensure the project's success.
- Attend regular scheduled RIOT Champion meetings to stay up to date with latest research and resources.

Click the button below to submit an EOI





## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### School Clustering

Schools are grouped to support clusters of similar demographics to implement the project.

### RIOT Champion Training

RIOT Champions are trained in change management methodology to support in school implementation.

### School implementation

Parentshop will support RIOT Champions to design protocols within schools aimed at helping teens build resilience.

### All staff training

Staff will participate in professional learning to counter anxiety habits in teenagers, as they arise in the school environment.

### Parent training & Engagement

By providing family management training for parents through webinars with psychologists, parents can better deal with a teen's mild-level anxiety at home.

Schools will have ongoing support to implement the project through the RIOT Champions, and have access to resources and a school-community support network. By having this support schools will be better prepared to cement the program in their school life.



### CASE STUDY

## SECOND YEAR RIOT AT KOTARA HIGH SCHOOL

Contribution from Timothy Goodwin, a current RIOT Champion.

As Kotara High School embarked on its second year of RIOT some unique challenges emerged. As a school we decided to take a comprehensive approach to the delivery of RIOT in our first year. Students in all stage four and 5 PDHPE lessons spent term three engaging in the RIOT, practising strategies, exploring scenarios and developing their own "tool belt" to navigate school life, ensuring that they could engage in all it had to offer.

This approach presented multiple pros and cons. Delivery by the PDHPE staff meant that the message was consistent. All PDHPE teachers were responsible for the development of learning activities and explicitly understood the content through the nature of the PDHPE subject and their lead up work. It also meant, however, that if RIOT was to be a whole school program, we needed to consider how to engage all teachers to ensure a common language and strategy is used when engaging with students. This was the driving focus of 2023.

RIOT Refresher Mornings" for each year group have been developed utilising year advisors, HT Wellbeing, and other classroom teachers. Professional learning days have also been used to workshop the use of SALON conversations and remind all staff of how students may be viewing the challenges of their individual classrooms. Year seven students will still engage with the program comprehensively during term two PDHPE lessons with the aim of building a solid foundation of understanding to build on and reflect upon as they move through their transition to high school and beyond.

More challenges will inevitably emerge as we continue to strive towards the goal of giving all of our students the tools they need to step outside their comfort zones. We will shift and pivot as needed, remaining flexible in our approach to continue to support their needs.

CHAMPION FEEDBACK >

## VIDEO

**B**rendan Crosilla is a RIOT Champion at Rooty Hill High School which implemented the project in 2023. Scan the QR code below to listen to his feedback about how Rooty Hill implemented the project in a format that worked with their school and learning values along with the exceptional response received from teachers and students.



"We've had a really good buy-in this term from students really seeing the value in this program."  
 "It's been really well received from our teachers, they all are on board."

COMMUNITY APPROACH >

## PARENTS

Teachers can't be expected to tackle their students' anxiety on their own. There are a range of significant adults, such as parents, play an important role in shaping a teenager's thoughts and behaviours. It is important for these adults to equip themselves with the necessary tools to scaffold resilient thinking through serve and return conversation techniques. As part of the RIOT Project schools will receive free and discounted vouchers for the Resilience in Our Teens for Parents webinar series to learn these essential skills. The benefit to this is to create a community around teenagers that help them to challenge their anxious thoughts and behaviours and build resilient young people ready to take on the inevitable ups and downs of life.

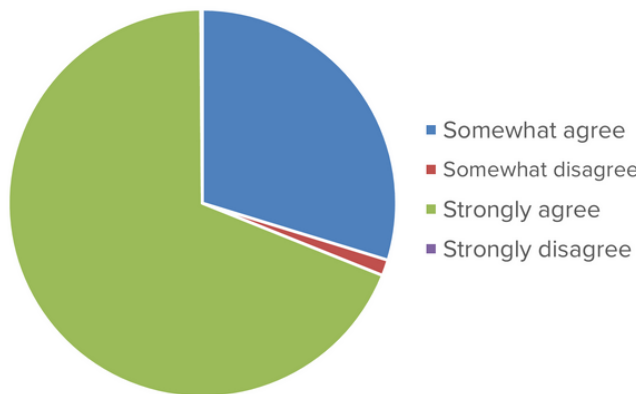
"Thanks so much! [The course] was very articulate in teaching us of the special characteristics and nuances around adolescence and how best to guide our youngsters through it. Whilst remaining open minded to the specifics of our individual situations where tailored approaches were discussed." Jim - Parent

INDUSTRY >

## DATA

**T**he implementation of the RIOT program depends on stakeholders' commitment to carrying out 'serve-and-return' conversations. In a recent survey of 753 teachers, 99% showed their commitment to holding these conversations.

I am committed to implementing the program with 'serve & return' conversations.



Data collected from 15 NSW high schools implementing the RIOT program in 2023

*"A teenager's anxiety will not usually fix itself. Unless something changes, it will tend to worsen. However, the good news is that seemingly modest interventions delivered by significant adults can make a difference and turn that progression around."*

Michael Hawton MAPS;  
Psychologist

ONGOING SUPPORT >

# COMMUNITY

Tackling student anxiety is a big job with many challenges. To help schools and their teachers in this journey, we have created a support network. Champions can connect with the wider RIOT Champion community through our Zoom Cafes. The fortnightly check-ins have provided an opportunity to share how schools have carried out the program in their school as well as success stories, challenges, tips and tricks and further recourses.

The learning platform also provides a space for RIOT Champions to access shared recourses and on-going support from Parentshop. An example of one of these resources is pictured below originally created by a RIOT Champion from Yass High School, the card below is used as a reminder for teachers and students of their resilient thinking goals.



SEE IT IN ACTION >

## EXAMPLE

See the project being carried out in Resilience in Our Teens™ school Henry Kendall High School .



"The day was important for all of us because we normalise that its okay to be not okay, [but] we have these things to implement for you to feel better."

"We have such awesome students and staff that are backing us so yeah to trust in them when we're going through a rough spot."

RESILIENCE  
IN OUR  
TEENS™

### RESILIENT LEARNERS

5 Tips for students

#### SELF-CHECK FIRST

What am I thinking?  
Do my thoughts match the situation?  
What is another explanation?

#### USE ACCURATE WORDS

How do I feel?  
What am I worried about?  
What help do I need?  
Who can help me?

#### FOCUS MODE

Use calming strategies.  
Relax my breathing.  
What is one thing I can try to solve?

#### FIND A BUDDY

Who can help me be CALM?  
Who can LISTEN?  
Who can give good FEEDBACK?

#### BE A BUDDY

Focus on CALM before TALK.  
Feelings will come and go.  
What feelings should I let go?  
What feelings need to be helped?