Frazzled parents and out-of-control toddlers can all benefit from a play-based therapy to foster happy, safe and loving relationships.

The School of Psychology is offering frazzled parents and their toddlers the opportunity to benefit from a play-based therapy which fosters happy, safe and loving relationships.

Parent-Toddler Therapy (P-TOT) is based on the already successful Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) - shown to improve problem behaviours in children 3-7 years old and reduce stress levels in their parents.

Psychologist Rae Thomas said experience from PCIT suggested families with younger children would also benefit.

"After years of feeling overwhelmed and stressed in parenting, we have found that PCIT reduces stress levels and improves parental sensitivity and feelings of connection to their children," she said.

"If we can do this earlier in the parent-child relationship we can stop years of frustration," she said.

A typical P-TOT session involves a parent and toddler playing together in one room while a psychologist observes them through a one-way mirror and assists the parent via a microphone and earpiece.

Ms Thomas said it was normal for parents to struggle to understand their toddlers’ behaviours and to experience feelings such as a sense of inadequacy, frustration and being overwhelmed.

P-TOT gives parents an opportunity to learn additional skills, read behavioural cues in their toddlers and implement practical suggestions to increase their enjoyment of parenting.

"Toddlers who toss food around the room are experimenting, learning and testing the boundaries of their environment. They are not just misbehaving. Understanding developmental stages and the many reasons for their toddlers’ behaviours help parents feel more positive about their abilities as parents," Ms Thomas said.

The free 12-week program is offered on the Gold Coast for families with toddlers 12-30 month old. Initial funding for P-TOT has come from the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund.
Partnership promotes focus on dental care in the bush

An agreement between Griffith and global consumer products company Colgate-Palmolive will fund a professorial chair in rural, remote and Indigenous oral health.

Dean of Dentistry and Oral Health Professor Newell Johnson said the agreement supports the University’s commitment to social justice and his own vision for a strong public health focus in the School’s curriculum.

“The Colgate Chair in Rural, Remote and Indigenous Oral Health provides us with a fantastic opportunity to help advance oral health outcomes in these needy areas.”

He said Indigenous communities who suffer from geographic and socioeconomic disadvantage, limited access to health care, and multiple health risk factors will benefit.

“This improves our capacity to build synergies between oral and general health promotion, research the common risk factors in Indigenous communities, and expose oral health professionals to the challenges and rewards of working in these communities,” Professor Johnson said.

Recruitment to the position is currently underway. Suitable candidates will have a background in dentistry, health promotion or other health disciplines and a vision for innovative teaching and research that will improve health outcomes in marginalised communities.

Team approach to nursing and medical education

Professor Amanda Henderson, School of Nursing and Midwifery and Dr Heather Alexander, School of Medicine have been awarded Associate Fellowships from the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

The fellowships will facilitate an innovative project to bring nursing and medical students together for clinical education which better reflects the realities of clinical practice and encourages better communication and team work between the health professions.

Professor Henderson said patient safety largely depended on effective communication and collaboration between the health professions.

“We need doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to all work together in healthcare settings yet we currently provide limited opportunities for those professions to learn together at undergraduate level.”

The project will identify areas of the curriculum such as health assessment and care planning where final year nursing and medical students can work together as teams during their clinical placements.

Dr Alexander said while there was growing evidence for the value of inter-professional learning, students in the health professions trained largely independently of each other.

“We want to enhance the student learning experience, improve their understanding of other professional groups and their confidence in interacting with each other,” she said.

“Ultimately we also hope to improve the patients’ experiences – that they feel their concerns are a priority, are truly considered in interdisciplinary forums and dealt with in a highly professional manner.”

While the pilot study involves nursing and medical students, the model will also be adaptable to other health students.

Griffith promotes research in primary health care

The School of Medicine has been awarded funding through the Department of Health and Ageing to develop primary health care research.

Griffith is one of five sites across Queensland working collaboratively on the Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) project aimed at improving the quality of research and increasing the number of research projects in primary health care.

Griffith PHCRED supports early career primary health care researchers by offering financial assistance, research skills development and networking opportunities, as well as access to a wide range of resources through our website.

All primary health care clinicians including GPs, allied health, nurses, pharmacists and Indigenous health workers are encouraged to access these services for their research projects.

Research is the key to providing better care, preventing illness and promoting healthy lifestyles for individuals and our communities. Medical research is a Commonwealth Government priority, and a wide range of funding and grants are available for research projects and education in research.

Visit www.griffith.edu.au/phcred for more information about Griffith PHCRED and current funding opportunities or contact

PHCRED Facilitator,
Libby Holden on 07 3382 1364 or email l.holden@griffith.edu.au

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Staff Profiles

Dr Jackie Holt, BEd, MStudEd, PhD
Research Fellow, School of Psychology

Jackie recently joined the School as a Research Fellow on Dr Paula Brough’s ARC Discovery project researching work-family balance. The purpose of the grant is to validate a new work-family balance measure and theoretical model across four countries over three years.

Prior to joining Griffith, Jackie gained her PhD in Population Health (researching the reduction of psychological distress amongst GPs via improving perceptions of control, effective work practices and enhanced work-life balance) and has over 20 years experience in the health and education fields. Despite what she now knows about the psychological health of doctors, she remains happily married to an anaesthetist.

Jackie’s recent interests include long work hours and the impact for work performance, individual health and family outcomes. As well as academic contributions, Jackie has also run her own successful consultancy focusing on producing initiatives to reduce occupational psychological distress and improve work-life balance in a range of occupations. Trying to do all this while bringing together a blended family of five teenagers, means that Jackie also has lots (and lots) of practical experience.

Professor Florian Mack Dr. med. dent. (Berlin) Dr. med. dent. habil (Greifswald)
Professor of Comprehensive Adult Dental Care, Discipline Head
Prosthodontics and Restorative Dentistry, School of Dentistry and Oral Health

Professor Florian Mack, School of Dentistry and Oral Health, has successfully defended his thesis for the degree of Dr Med Dent Habil (Habilitation) - the most senior research degree in the German system. The Habilitation requires a minimum of 12 international journal publications and a thesis summarising five of the most significant of those papers. His thesis, "Dental and prosthetic status among elderly: prevalence, related risk factors and impact on quality of life", was based on epidemiological data from Germany’s largest health survey, the Study of Health in Pomerania.

Professor Mack, a prosthodontist and Professor of Comprehensive Adult Dental Care at Griffith, said tooth loss significantly impacted on nutritional status in the elderly which in turn led to a deterioration in general health and further exacerbation of oral health problems. He said creating specific oral health programs for the elderly to interrupt that cycle was a challenge - especially in countries such as Australia where dental care was underfunded.

“ Tooth loss is a growing problem in a population that is ageing. It needs to be recognised that the cheapest treatments such as tooth extraction and replacement with poor quality dentures will have long term costs.” He said the supply of good quality fixed and removable dentures was better supported in Germany where government funded health insurance pays about half the costs.

Professor Mack and his colleague Associate Professor Jeroen Kroon are collaborating to establish epidemiological studies into the oral health status of the elderly on the Gold Coast.

Staff Awards

International College of Dentists Awards
At its annual meeting in Sydney recently, the Australasian section of the International College of Dentists admitted Associate Professor Kerrod Hallett and Professor Newell Johnson as Fellows.

This recognises ability, meritorious service, and leadership as health professionals: in the case of A/Prof Hallet for excellence and community service in the field of paediatric dentistry; for Prof Johnson in oral medicine and pathology and in dental education.

Griffith Awards for Excellence in Teaching
Dr Debra Bath, School of Psychology was recognised for her contributions to student learning and excellence in teaching. Debra was the joint winner of the Early Career Award.

Her citation particularly referred to her engagement with students, the thoughtful design of her courses and her commitment to reflective education.

E-Learning Fellowship
Dr Neil Harris, School of Public Health has been awarded an E-Learning Fellowship. His Fellowship will focus on how on-line collaborative environments can be developed to support interactive peer learning and to develop a framework for using interactive collaborative environments that can be adopted and distributed throughout the University.
Staff News

National inquiry into the impact of illicit drugs on families
Professor Sharon Dawe has been invited to give evidence into the national inquiry into the impact of illicit drugs on families. The hearings are open to the public and media and recorded by Hansard.

This invitation, by the Inquiry Chair Senator Bronwyn Bishop, particularly recognises Professor Dawe’s work with the Parents Under Pressure (PUP) Program.

You can read about Professor Dawe’s work in Dawe S and Harnett PH. Reducing child abuse potential in methadone maintained parents: Results from a randomised controlled trial, Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment (2007).

Australia’s first Centre of Excellence for Policing and Security
Australia’s first Centre of Excellence for Policing and Security will be hosted by Griffith University.

Minister Bishop announced that funding of $10 million from the Australian Research Council together with $5.4 million from the Centre’s partners would be awarded to Griffith to establish the Centre.

Griffith University will lead the partnership with the Australian National University, the University of Queensland, Charles Sturt University, Australian Federal Police, Forensic Science South Australia, New South Wales Police Forensic Services Group, Queensland Police Service, Tasmanian Police Service, Victoria Police, National ICT Australia (NICTA), Australian Institute of Criminology, Jill Dando Institute, University College London, State University of New York, University of Montreal, Hebrew University of Cape Town and Hebrew University.

The five-year project will create an internationally regarded centre of research excellence that will help prevent crime and safeguard Australia.

The Centre’s research program will provide policy-makers, police and security leaders with a better understanding of how to reduce the number and seriousness of threats to Australia and diminish the number of security and crime vulnerabilities.

Chief investigators include Associate Professor Mark Kebbel from the School of Psychology.

New Appointments

School of Psychology
Head of School: Associate Professor Alf Lizzio
Acting Deputy Head of School: Gold Coast - Associate Professor Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck (Semester 1); Dr Shirley Morrissey (commencing Semester 2); Mt Gravatt - Dr Analise O’Donovan (Semester 1); Dr Liz Jones (commencing Semester 2).

School of Nursing and Midwifery
Dr Saras Henderson, Senior Lecturer

Departures

School of Medical Sciences
Dr Francesca Fernandez has left the School of Medical Sciences for Singapore, but will continue collaboration with the Genomics Research Centre as an adjunct.

Student News

Students raise $65,000 for Ghana
A Gala Charity Dinner Dance organised by HOPE4HEALTH students recently to raise funds for a medical centre in Ghana, West Africa has proved to be an outstanding success.

More than 500 guests, including many from the medical profession, attended the black-tie function which featured African drumming and inspiring guest speakers who have worked as doctors in Africa. International past president of Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) Dr Rowan Gillies convinced the audience that even small amounts of money could make a big difference to the lives of people in developing countries.

Queensland Health Minister Stephen Robertson also gave a brief address congratulating the students for upholding Griffith’s commitment to social justice.

An auction on the night contributed to the outstanding fundraising tally of $65,000.
Group News

Pharmacy Accreditation
The Council of Pharmacy Registering Authorities (COPRA) has endorsed the recommendations of its New Zealand and Australian Pharmacy Schools Accreditation Committee (MAPSAC) that Griffith University’s BPharmSc (pre-pharmacy major) and MPharm degree courses be granted provisional accreditation as an articulated program leading to an acceptable qualification for registration as a pharmacist in the Australian states and territories.

Memorandum of Understanding - Tzu Chi University, Taiwan
The Vice Chancellor of Griffith University and President of Tzu Chi University have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate teaching and research collaboration in Public Health. A Diploma in Health Promotion is planned on the Gold Coast campus for Tzu Chi undergraduates.

Griffith Disability and Rehabilitation Unit hosts visit from Disabled Federation of China
Members of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Unit (DARRU) and the School of Human Services Professor Lesley Chenoweth, Christine Randall, and Avanka Vandenberg met with a delegation of 19 members from the Disabled Federation of China.

The three Griffith representatives talked to the visitors about the social welfare system for the disabled people and relevant laws and regulations in Australia. Our representatives also provided an overview of the vocational training and employment support and guide for the disabled in Australia.

The Disabled Federation of China is the top government organisation supporting the people with disabilities in China. The Federation’s Director Wang Jian Jun was a key participant in the visit.

Visit by Child Development Psychologist
Dr Kym Macfarlane, Jennifer Cartmel and Chris Maher recently hosted a visit to Logan campus by Dr Sharne Rolfe. Dr Rolfe is a lecturer and psychologist in child development at the University of Melbourne. Logan’s Child and Family Studies program has been very progressive in its approach to rethinking professional practice with babies and toddlers. Having Dr Rolfe on campus was a chance to link their innovative work with students in the field education program with significant Australian research about secure attachment for babies and toddlers in child care settings.

Dr Rolfe spoke with staff and students about her work in child care settings and in the area of child protection. Her work links with the progressive approaches undertaken within the School of Human Services to prepare professionals to work in the sectors.

Nissoken Bachelor of Nursing Graduation
The graduation of the 25th cohort of students to complete the Bachelor of Nursing Post-Registration degree program was held in February. The program continues to be a success with over 960 students graduating from the program to date.

Dr Denis Polit, Adjunct Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery and world-renowned research methodologist presented the occasional address. In 1978, Dr. Polit published Nursing Research: Principles & Methods, which quickly became a leading research methods textbook for nurses worldwide and is currently going into its 8th edition. In 1985, Dr Polit published the award-winning undergraduate textbook, Essentials of Nursing Research, now in its 7th edition. Data Analysis and Statistics for Nursing Research was published in 1996.

The ceremony was attend by Mr Yoshi Koshitani and Mr. Taka Honen from the Nissoken Group as well as family, friends and School of Nursing and Midwifery staff.

As the highest achieving graduate Ms Satoko Hirata received the Award for Academic Excellence in Nursing.

T.E.D. Human Resource Development Centre - Singapore
Associate Professor Elizabeth Patterson and Dr Philippa Seaton-Sykes, School of Nursing and Midwifery, attended the second graduation ceremony for our nursing students in Singapore. T.E.D. HRDC, formerly known as Cornerstone Training Centre, held a graduation ceremony which included graduates from the second, third and fourth cohorts of students.

Since it commenced in Singapore in 2003, over 150 students have enrolled in the program, providing registered nurses in Singapore and surrounding countries with an opportunity to upgrade their college qualifications to a professional degree in nursing. To date 60 students have graduated from the program and a small number of graduates have attended ceremonies in Australia.

Ms Tan Teck Kim received the Award for Academic Excellence in Nursing.
Conference Presentations

The following presentations were made at the Dietitians Association of Australia National Conference, held in Hobart May 24-26, 2007 where Ben Desbrow also co-facilitated the workshop entitled Contemporary Sports Nutrition Practice.

- Baillie L & Hughes R. A study of health service providers views regarding nutrition and physical activity promotion for socio-demographically disadvantaged pregnant women and new mothers.
- Baillie L & Hughes R. Capacity building as a core strategy in community-level public health nutrition intervention: The Growing Years Project as a case study.
- Baillie L, Shield D, Nalatu S, Hughes R. Feasibility testing and stakeholder engagement in community-based nutrition and physical activity promotion intervention development.
- Hughes R. An analysis of public health nutrition workforce development and the obesity crisis: A case of system failure?
- Hughes R & Lawrence R. Food industry sponsorship and the nutrition profession: Why we can’t have our cake and eat it.
- Shield D, Attenborough V, Shelton D, Creedy D, Hughes R. Retrospective investigation of infant growth and feeding records as a basis for monitoring and surveillance at a local community level.
- Stewart R. Dietetic students’ perceptions of the clinical placement environment and its impact on competency development.
- Swift T & Desbrow B. Implementing the Nutrient Reference Values: the economic impact for older, low income Australians.

Professor David Shum convened the Australian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI) 30th Annual Conference which was held May 3-5, 2007. The theme of the conference was Ecological Practice: Assessment and Rehabilitation. A wonderful cross-disciplinary conference program of national and international speakers across fields such as clinical neuropsychology, speech pathology and clinical physiotherapy. Dr Tamara Ownsworth also made significant contributions to the conference through her membership of the organising committee.

The following presentations were made at the Kindling the Flame: Promoting mental health and wellbeing conference, held in Perth, February 21-23, 2007:

- Sun J & Stewart D. Using health promoting school approach to promote healthy school environment.
- Sun J & Stewart D. New models in promoting primary school children’s mental health: Resilient Children and Communities project.

Professor Marianne Wallis presented at the Griffith University Office For Research Linkage Seminars March 20, 2007 Griffith University, Gold Coast campus on ARC Linkage Partnerships – Working with Queensland Health.
Research Update

Prof Peter Creed, A/Prof Nick Buys and Dr Clare Tilbury have been successful in receiving an ARC Linkage grant of $141,424 over 3 years for their project entitled Promoting successful further education and work transitions for young people in state care.

Together with the School of Industrial Relations (Professor Greg Bamber, Professor Adrian Wilkinson and Dr Cameron Allen) Associate Professor Ian Glendon has been awarded a grant of $154,000 under the Queensland State Government’s “Smart Workplaces” program. The funding will enable the Griffith University research team to work in collaboration with other two other research teams and the Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) on a project to investigate productive employment relationships in selected high-performance Queensland workplaces. This follows the successful completion of a small project for the DEIR in 2006 by Associate Professor Glendon.

Dr Paula Brough has been successful in her Griffith University Industry Collaborative Scheme grant application Work well-being: Evaluating progress and identifying future directions. The Queensland Police Service will contribute a total of $50,000 ($40,000 cash and $10,000 in-kind support) this year for this research project. This grant builds on a previous three-year research collaboration between QPS & GU (co-authored by Associate Professor Elizabeth Kendall, Dr Juanita Muller and Dr Paula Brough and funded entirely by QPS). Together these two collaborations will provide a strong basis for a NCG application in 2008. One of the School’s honours students Natalie Gracia will base her 2007 thesis on a part of this organisational psychology research project.

Dr Jing Sun in the School of Public Health received a $30,000 grant from Queensland Health for her child protection project entitled Child Safety Service Delivery Model and Implementation Plan.

Professor Don Stewart and Dr Neil Harris have received funding from Logan City Council ($10,000) and Queensland Health ($5,000) for their HYPE: Hip-Hop for Health pilot project to promote physical activity and connectedness through dance in high schools in the Logan area.

Carolyn Ehrlich received a $10,782 Griffith Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development (GPHCRED) Fellowship to assist with her work on the Place-Based Initiative, a chronic disease management project. Her research project aims to investigate the access and utilisation of self-management information by people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Rosemary Mahomed received a $1,000 GPHCRED writing bursary for her paper based on research she has undertaken to assess the effectiveness of chronic disease self-management courses in helping people with a chronic disease to better self-manage their condition.

Professor Leanne Aitken is a mentor on a Queensland Health Nursing Research - Novice Researcher grant entitled Adaption and validation of the QualPaCs to measure quality of patient care in ICU with investigators D Carney and S Clayton which received $9,841 for 2007.

Dr Sandie McCarthy is a Chief Investigator on a Queensland Health Nursing Research grant entitled The effects of exercise as a nursing intervention to improve general physical health status in haemodialysis patients: A pilot study which received $9,778. Other investigators are A Henson, L Finch, J Develin, S Chatterton, B Gillespie, L Orazio and C Hawley.

Ben Desbrow received a $5,000 student research grant from Sports Dietitians Australia/Gatorade for his project entitled The effects of caffeine on endurance cycling performance and carbohydrate oxidation: a dose-response study.

Disability and law leadership project receives seed funding from Griffith Socio-Legal Research Centre

School of Human Services researcher Dr Fiona Kumari Campbell and Senior Research Officer Ms Lyn Hamilton have been awarded $11, 534 research seed funding to conduct research on leadership in the area of disability and law. According to Campbell and Hamilton, much of the work on law and disability to date has focused on the procedural aspects of law.

“This project moves beyond that orientation and is concerned with generating capacity building in the form of the leadership skillling of disabled people so that they are better equipped for the task of legal mobilisation,” Dr Campbell said.

“The absence and low visibility of people with disabilities taking on leadership and advocacy initiatives in the areas of law reform and social change results in governments being able to ignore, marginalise and weaken the civil rights of disabled people,” she said.

Dr Campbell is currently Convenor of the Disability Studies Stream in the School of Human Services Griffith University and member of the Socio-Legal Research Centre. The Socio-Legal Research Centre investigates the origins, operations and effects of legal regimes, policies and practices. Under its Social Justice Research program is a small, but emerging stream concerned with law and disability.