



I RISE

Indigenous Racial Identity & Self Esteem:
Risk and Protective Factors 10-12 year old
West Australian Aboriginal school children

C Kickett-Tucker Nov 2006

Significance

- 'Low' self-esteem is considered a potential catalyst for many social problems experienced by Aboriginal people (Affairs, 1992; Mason & Wilson, 1988).
- Urban Aboriginal children and youths are more at risk of developing difficulties with their social and emotional wellbeing (including self-esteem) than their rural and remote counterparts (Zubrick et al., 2005).
- Culturally appropriate measures that examine the sense of self including self-concept, self-esteem and racial identity for indigenous Australian children are almost non-existent (Dudgeon et al, 1990).
- In the WAACHS study, carers made responses about self-esteem on behalf of children aged 4-12 years of age. Younger children did not respond themselves, thus this study will provide the opportunity for young urban Aboriginal children to respond themselves to questions about what they think about themselves and how this makes them feel.

Project Objectives

SHORT TERM

- To develop a sound knowledge base of indigenous children's sense of self including self-esteem and identity.
- To utilise this knowledge to determine culturally appropriate criteria that forms indigenous sense of self and its related constructs.
- To pilot the I-RISE measure with 50 urban Aboriginal children.

LONG TERM

- To utilise the I-RISE measure for a full scale research project in the near future.

Research Questions

- What element(s) comprise indigenous children's identity and how do they impact upon it?
- What element(s) comprise indigenous children's self-esteem and how do they impact upon it?
- What is the relationship between self-esteem and identity of indigenous children and how do they impact sense of self?

Methodology

- Literature review and I RISE Measure developed
- Qualitative (personal interviews) and quantitative (measure) methods
- Qualitative data analysed by extracting common themes
- Quantitative data analyses using SPSS
- I RISE analysed with other data

What is the IRISE?

1. C form (child response form), with parts A, B, C, D:
 - **Part A: Getting to Know each other** 😊
 - **Part B: Gathering Demographic Details**
 - **Part C: Survey Questions** 71 items
 - **Part D: Getting to Know the Participant Some More** 🎵
2. Smiley Face score sheet (accompanies C form)
3. People diagram (accompanies C form)
- +
1. F form (carer response form)

Part C: Survey Questions

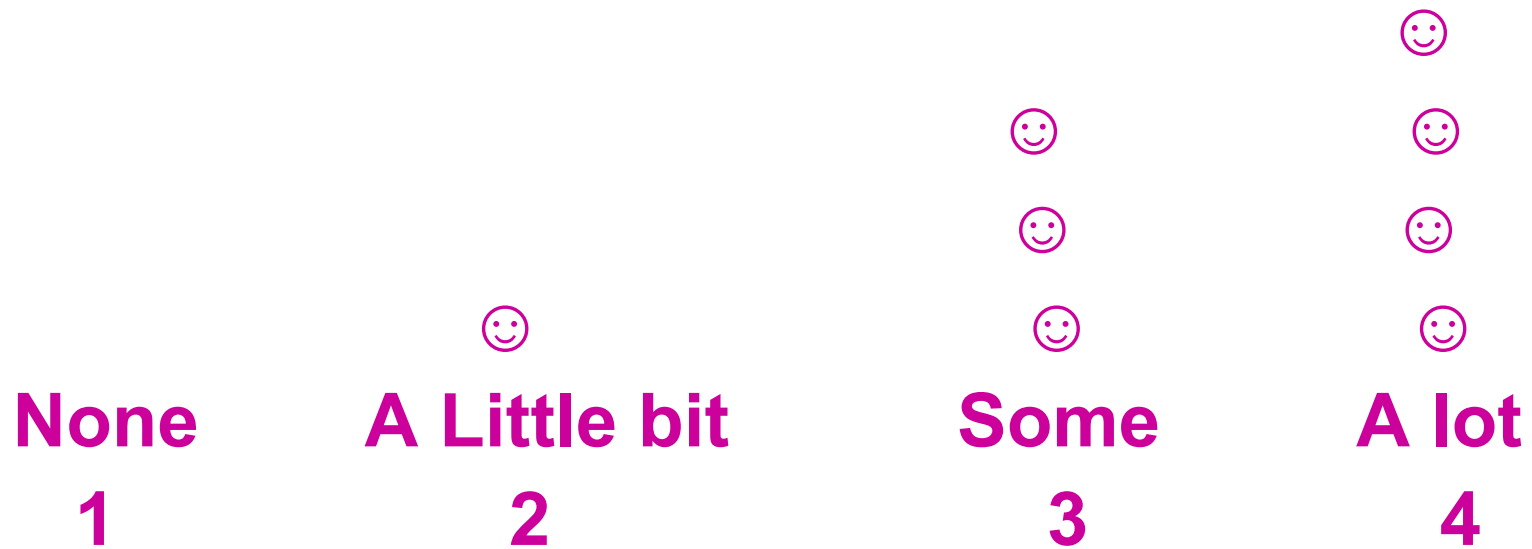
1. How much

- do you like playing sport?

2. How important is it for you

- to play sport ?

Scoring for the IRISE



Concepts of IRISE

- Achievement domains (sport, music, art, academic, employment)
- Culture
- Social Interactions/relationships
- Racial/group Identity

Data Sources

- Children's IRISE survey
- Children's personal interview
- School records1 (attendance, behaviour, report, medical, carer information for each child participant)
- School records2 (total school population/gender, Aboriginal student population/gender)
- Demographic information (obtained from main carer)

Participants

- 10-12 year old Aboriginal children
- 5 EDWA schools (1 south, 2 north, 2 east)
- n= 23 and children's main carer
- 14 Females
- 9 Males
- 17 of which born in metropolitan Perth

Identity

CHILD (Aboriginal identity)

- 18 confirmed Aboriginal identity
- 4 stated “half-Aboriginal”
- 16 confirmed their Aboriginal group affiliation:
 - 9 Nyoongars
 - 7 Unknown
 - 6 Aboriginal
 - 1 Yamatji

CHILD (Other identity)

- 9 confirmed other identity:
 - 3 Wadjullah
 - 1 (quarter) Wadjullah
 - 1 Australian
 - 1 English
 - 1 Irish
 - 1 Malaysian
 - 1 Seychelles Islander

Mother's Aboriginal Identity

- 16 Mums Aboriginal
- 5 Mums not Aboriginal
- 14 knew Mum's Aboriginal group:
 - 6 Nyoongar
 - 4 Aboriginal
 - 2 Yamatji

Language

- Descriptor for non-Aboriginal people:
 - 9 Yes
 - 9 No
 - 4 Sometimes
- Word commonly used: Wadjullah
- Aboriginal language use:
 - 19 No
 - 3 Sometimes
 - 1 Yes

Emerging themes from preliminary findings

- Achievement
 - Sport consistent with identity and self-esteem of males and females
 - Art contributor to females' identity
 - Going to school important to males' and females' self-esteem
 - Being good at school work important to males' and females' self-esteem
 - Aboriginal people having jobs important to males' and females' self-esteem

Emerging themes

- Culture
 - Humour part of males' and females' self-esteem and identity
 - Storytelling is a contributor to males' identity
 - Heritage important to males' self-esteem

Emerging themes

- Social interactions/relationships
 - Play with Aboriginal kids is a contributor to females' identity
 - Respect for elders is a contributor to females' identity and is also important to males' and females' self-esteem
 - Helping others important to females' self-esteem
 - Being treated well at school is important to both males' and females' self-esteem
 - Being loved by family is a contributor to males' and females' identity and self-esteem
 - Family modelling important to males' self-esteem
 - Parents caring for family important to males' and females' self-esteem

Emerging themes

- Racial/group identity
 - Like being Aboriginal is a contributor to males' and females' identity. It is also important to females' self-esteem
 - Group acceptance and Aboriginal friends important to males' self-esteem and females' identity
 - Role models is a contributor to females' identity
 - Not being shame of Aboriginality is important to males' and females' self-esteem
 - Having pride in Aboriginality and knowledge of the flag important to self-esteem and identity of males and females
 - Having dark skin does not matter to the self-esteem of males and the identity of both males and females

What's next?

- Pilot of 4-7 year olds
IRISE
- Full scale research
project in Perth,
Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and
Mandurah
- I RISE National project
- International project with
Maori (NZ), First Nations
(Canada), Native
Americans (USA)

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to

- Aboriginal children and families who have given me permission to use their pictures in this presentation
- Aboriginal child participants and their carers for participating in this project
- Tracy, Yandi, Sue and Anne for assisting me in the research process
- EDWA and District Education Offices for permission to conduct the study
- Carol Garlett for her support and direction
- AIEOs (Lynne, Dawn, Betty, Tania, Fatima, Nat) for their commitment and work ethic
- School Principals, Deputies and Teachers for their support
- My support network (Helen Milroy, Juli, Rani, Ellen, David, Deborah J, Francis, Sven, Adele)
- My Nyoongar people who put me here in the first place!
- My kids and hubby for putting up with me