What is Rock & Water?

Rock & Water is a manual-based program that provides young people and adults a pathway to self awareness, and increased self-confidence and social functioning. The program is based upon a psycho-physical approach, that is, the program contains a large number of experiential exercises that support young people to develop self-awareness through physical exercises. The aim of the program is to support young people in developing:

- Body-awareness - or supporting young people become "in-tune" with their body, including body language, posture, breathing and physical sensations (e.g., stress, anger, arousal).
- Emotional-awareness - this is the process by which young people learn to understand and identify emotions (e.g., anger) within their body (body awareness is a pre-requisite to emotional awareness).
- Self awareness - this is the process by which young people combine body- and emotional-awareness with their thought processes, and through this, are able to manage and regulate their emotions/behaviours in the context of their environment.

In short, Rock & Water provides a systematic way to teach young people body-, emotional- and self-awareness. The program also provides a structured means for adults to nurture the physical and social development of young people. Physical exercises are constantly linked into cognitive and social skill-building.

What sets Rock & Water apart from other programs is its psycho-physical learning approach. The program includes the use of physical exercise, non-intrusive self-defence activities, role plays, group discussions and debriefing exercises. Each participant of the Rock & Water program undergoes a journey of self-awareness as they learn about responding to life in either a "rock" or a "water" attitude. The use of symbolism is central to the success of the Rock & Water program and the reason why young people are drawn to the program.

What is the difference between a "rock" attitude or a "water" attitude?

The "rock" quality represents awareness of one's own possibilities and personal journey in life. A person demonstrating "rock" traits will exhibit resoluteness, be strong-willed and self assured, and may close off to the opinions and offerings from others. The "rock" attitude may confront others in relation to their opinion or point of view, and young people need to exhibit some "rock" qualities if they are to respond to and manage peer pressure.

The "water" quality represents insight and experience, and valuing flexibility within human relationships. A person demonstrating water traits has a strong awareness of their own feelings and ideas, but more importantly, is able to respond with understanding to people around them. "Water" is representative of sharing, co-operative behaviour, negotiating and being able to respond to a changing environment. Social harmony and positive relationships require an individual to exhibit "water" qualities.
The Rock & Water program teaches participants insight into their dominant attitude, that is, whether they are a "rock" or "water" dominant person. The program nurtures appropriate use of both attitudes, while challenging the negative characteristics of each. By the end of the program, each young person has a deeper level of self awareness into how they can apply each attitude in an effective manner.

Why do young people love Rock & Water....?

Rock and Water is not like traditional classroom learning...it is experiential and young people experience it as fun and playful...but at the same time learn valuable insight into themselves and others. Rock & Water fosters success, especially for children and young people who previously have not experienced success in the classroom. Research shows that when young people learn while having fun (or any strong positive emotion) then their brains process the learning at a deeper level.

Young people pick up on and love the use of symbolic language in Rock & Water. They are readily able to understand the difference between acting from either a "rock" or a "water" attitude. The most important part of this symbolism is that it fosters self-acceptance in young people, which in itself, is fundamental to psychological well-being. Young people's behaviours can be described in terms of "rock" or "water" qualities, both of which have positive and negative attributes. This contrasts traditional behaviour management techniques that refer to young people's in terms such as "good" or "bad", "acceptable" or "not acceptable". By using this language, young people exhibiting challenging behaviours are more willing to reflect on their behaviours. Rock & Water is highly effective for children and young people with backgrounds of trauma as the language used reduces the shame that is evoked by the language used in many traditional behaviour management techniques.