

Welcome to Issue 6 of **INStAnt!**

We are delighted that you support INSA via your membership and hope that this newsletter helps you in your work. In this August 2021 issue, the INSA Communications Committee is pleased to present a sampling of practical and scientific developments from England, The Netherlands, The United States and Sweden as well as updates on INSA's work. To contribute to future issues or share ideas for INSA, please contact us at info@insa.network



International

2021 INSA Conference – An Update from the Conference Committee

The INSA Conference Committee has been busy preparing for this year's online conference.

We are pleased to bring you a full and varied program featuring leaders in the field. The program will include a range of clinical, educational, consumer, and research focused presentations from a wide range of disciplines, countries, and perspectives.

As well as our four outstanding keynote presentations, are pleased to be bringing you presentations from four invited speakers including:

1. Hans Shuman from University of Erasmus, The Netherlands. In line with the theme of the conference, Hans will speak about the important topic of interprofessional collaboration and the missing voices of parents and students.
2. Deborah Gray and Colleagues, from [School Can't](#), Australia. Deborah and her colleagues will provide a 'lived experience' perspective and will speak about providing peer support for families with children and teens experiencing school refusal, or as they call it 'school can't'.
3. [Kristof De Witte](#) from KU Leuven, Faculty of Economics and Business, Belgium. Kristoff will speak about lessons from Covid-19 related school closures and the importance of school attendance and effective educational practices.
4. Sandra Inserra (Anglicare, Australia) & Kerryn Williams (Department of Education & Training, Victoria, Australia). Sandra and Kerryn will speak about practice and implementation aspects of delivering the [Navigator Program](#), a novel state-wide program for high school students who have severe attendance problems.

Be part of the conversation – host a round table discussion.

While our call for oral presentations is closed, we are open to receiving 'round table' abstracts and any late breaking work can be submitted as a poster presentation. [Click here](#) to submit your abstract.

FINAL Deadline: Monday 13th September.

Planning your Conference

To help you with your scheduling, please note that the conference will be held at the following times:

Day 1. 13th October:

9am - 4pm Australian Eastern Standard Time
12am - 7am Central European Summer Time
6pm (12th) - 1am (13th) Eastern Daylight Time (USA)

Day 2. 14th October:

4pm - 11pm Australian Eastern Standard Time
7am - 2pm Central European Summer Time
1am - 8am Eastern Daylight Time (USA) 13th October)

Will you miss a session? Don't worry - all sessions will be recorded and available to delegates for three months after the conference.

We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

2021 INSA Conference Organising Committee

Glenn Melvin
Lisa McKay-Brown
Lana Van Den Berghe
Irma De Wit

INStant!

The quick-and-easy update on attendance issues, developments, activities, and resources

INSA webinars

The webinar series at INSA is back. Each webinar is 45 minutes followed by a 15-minutes for question and answers with the speaker. We invite you to share broadly with your colleagues and organizational partners to join via zoom. Upcoming September 16 at 9am EST in US (2pm in UK, 3pm in Central Europe, and 11pm Australia) is a presentation by Professor Jacob Kirksey on 'how to reach out to absent students'. Professor Kirksey's latest work on school bus ridership and serving breakfast after-the-bell will inform his presentation. INSA members requested this topic. [Here \(https://iu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrcu-trTsiHt3bxq7iPheWz1EqyNHXUKU5\)](https://iu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrcu-trTsiHt3bxq7iPheWz1EqyNHXUKU5) is the link to register now.

News from England

According to Beth Bodycote, dominant clinical narratives often focus on negative aspects of parental involvement in school attendance problems (SAPs). In her doctoral study 'Seeking to Resolve School Attendance Problems: The Parental Journey', however, Beth Bodycote found that many parents of children with SAPs make reasonable efforts to secure attendance at school but are often hindered and disempowered by systemic responses and barriers.

Which tips can you share with INSA Members, based on what you have learned? When evaluating parental involvement and efficacy, please keep in mind that some parents will be doing all they can to resolve their children's SAPs. Rather than preventing or hindering a resolution, they may be encountering systemic issues and factors outside their control or influence, that act as barriers to achieving a resolution. As consideration of underlying cause of SAPs tend to focus upon within-child and within-family factors, the impact of school support for special educational need and disability (SEND) and ongoing mental or physical illness in particular seem to be overlooked. This may be because it is often assumed that schools, health, and local government services will be effectively supporting these needs. However, the findings of this study indicate that a lack of appropriate systemic support for SEND, and mental or physical illness can have a significant impact upon children's ability to attend, and parental efficacy in resolving school absence. Want to learn more? Contact Beth Bodycote: bethbodycote@aol.com.



News from The Netherlands

In The Netherlands, Cordula van Haersma Buma 'educational psychologist and CBT therapist' offers guidance to students with school attendance problems. Based upon her experience as working in a special needs school with mostly students with autism spectrum disorder, her activities are based on the belief that a strong partnership between professional help (for adolescent and parents) and school is what it takes to solve the problem.

Which one or two tips can you share with INSA Members, based on what you have learned? Involve everyone around the adolescent: adolescent, parents, teachers, school principal and any other relevant organisations involved. Get a proper overview of the adolescents' life, family and friends. Don't despair even if you get a fall back and the problems seem to start again, just see at what point you have to start again (never point zero) and give the adolescent the trust that he or she will eventually be able to get a diploma and have a normal life. Help parents in their educational skills through parent meetings. They always despair, want the best and don't know what else they can do, thinking they already did everything. They can help each other enormously but also they need to think about their own reason to react in certain ways that might not be very helpful (why do you feel as a parent already a negative emotion when you climb the stairs to wake your child in the morning? Does it have to do with something in you or your own history?). Want to learn more? Contact Cordula van Haersma Buma: cordula.buma@ziggo.nl.



News from the The United States

In The United States, Jayne Demsky witnessed that many schools carry vast assumptions and misinterpretations of school refusal, its underlying causes, and the distress the kids and families face as they live these scenarios day after day. After seven years of running her school refusal website for parents, Jayne realized that to affect change, she needs to include educating educators and their schools by promoting school refusal awareness, sharing facts and best practices to help get kids back to school. Having schools understand School Avoidance will help improve their empathy, support, and assistance. Jayne just launched SchoolAvoidane.Org, the School Avoidance Alliance, to accelerate this information flow to help students, families, and schools more effectively. She is dedicated to changing misconceptions about this condition and promoting evidence-based solutions for school refusal. For more information, you can reach her at jayne@schoolrefusalhope.org, or www.SchoolAvoidance.Org, or @SchoolAvoidance on Twitter.



News from Sweden

In Sweden, Aggie Öhman founded the Prestationsprinsen & vänner (P & V), which is a nonprofit organization that supports families struggling with everyday life and school. It's mission is to increase the understanding and change the way adults reply to children and young people who think and do differently than we want and hope for. School attendance is one of their main areas of interest. P & V also seeks to influence national education policy to recognize school attendance as an important factor in improving the quality of Swedish schools (meetings, seminars, articles etc.). The organization has also provided facts and figures on prevalence of school absence in Sweden.

Some of the things learned so far?

- First, it is extremely rare that children do not want to learn and attend school. In order to really improve the child's situation, you need to tackle the underlying reasons of the absence (e.g., bullying, special needs not met, the school is too exclusive, etc.).
- In addition, working actively with school attendance data and making analysis based on research and other schools' experiences is a successful way to detect potential school attendance problems early and a way of establishing if measures taken are successful, both on an organizational and individual level.

Want to learn more about this organization? Please visit prestationsprinsen.se/about-us, on which you can find many tips and information. Last fall Aggie also had a book published called Prestationsprinsen with 42 short stories on how to make life easier for our beloved kids.

