

# INStAnt!

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

Welcome to Issue 4 of **INStAnt!** We are delighted that you support INSA via your membership and hope this Newsletter also supports you in your work. In this January 2021 issue, the INSA Executive and its Communications Committee are pleased to present a sample of practical and scientific developments from Norway, Spain, and Japan, together with updates on INSA's work. To contribute to future issues or share ideas for INSA, please contact us at [info@insa.network](mailto:info@insa.network)



## International

### INSA webinars

In the second half of 2020, INSA launched a webinar series on topics related to schooling and absenteeism. In Webinar 1, panelists Michele Capurso and Glenn Melvin offered guidance on how to empower students as they re-enter their classrooms during the COVID pandemic. In Webinar 2, Fran Morgan and Gil Keppens discussed how to reach out to parents and students, and how collaboration between schools and parents is essential for addressing school attendance problems. In Webinar 3, Patricia Graczyk shared practical guidelines for schools implementing a multi-tiered system of supports / response to intervention framework, to promote attendance and reduce absenteeism. Our final Webinar in 2020 was facilitated by Brian Chu who elaborated on re-defining and addressing school engagement and school refusal in the time of COVID-19. We thank all these panelists for their valuable presentations, and all participants for joining in and interacting through the chat box.



Video recordings of Webinars and other supportive resources are available to INSA members on the [INSA website](#). After logging in, click the red MEMBERS menu and choose Webinars. A new series of Webinars will be offered in 2021, so keep an eye on the INSA website and the INSA twitter account (@INSAAttendance)!

### Upcoming Anthology: A Research Update and Where We Go Next

Towards the end of January 2021, an International anthology will be published by the [Jerring foundation](#), a Swedish foundation supporting research and work for children with special needs. The initiative for the anthology came from the Jerring Foundation in collaboration with INSA Member Malin Gren Landell. It consists of 13 chapters prepared by twenty INSA Members who provide an update of research on school attendance and absenteeism, aimed at stimulating further research in the field. The anthology will be free to download on the [Jerring foundation](#) website and distributed to authorities, universities, research groups, school mental health associations, and other groups that work to promote the social, mental, and educational welfare of youth. The Jerring foundation is deeply impressed by the work and thankful for the contribution by INSA Members.

### Call for Papers

INSA, in collaboration with [Continuity in Education](#), is hosting a call for papers. A Special Section of the journal will focus on activities or studies about what can be done to support students continuing their education and development despite difficulties or disruptions in their lives. It includes investigations on how school attendance can be classified and identified, and which approaches can be applied to prevent and manage school attendance problems. More information can be found on the [INSA](#) and [Continuity of Education](#) webpages or by contacting the managing editors at [info@insa.network](mailto:info@insa.network).

## Nordic Conference About School Attendance Problems

INSA Members are welcome to participate in an international conference on problematic school absence. Changes in society, new insights from research, and the complexity of working on school absenteeism call for the coordination of practices in schools and municipalities. During the conference you will hear more about: preventive work in school settings, early signs and risk factors for absenteeism, evidence-based interventions, and integration and collaboration between organizations. The conference is organized by a Nordic Erasmus+ project team and will be held as an online webinar on February 4, 2021 from 09.00 to 16.00 (CET). Registration is free. More information about the program and the presenters can be found [here](#).



## News from Japan

In the project 'CBT- Parents of Youth with Nonattendance', a Japanese team has developed and evaluated a cognitive behavioral parent support program to promote the mental health of parents of students with chronic absenteeism. School refusal among students may cause parents to lose confidence in their ability to manage non-attendance, which can impact their ability to facilitate a return to school. By improving stress management skills, the program intends to decrease parents' anxiety and depression and increase their quality of life.

Some of the things learned so far? Results indicate that the CBT parent support program is effective in alleviating parents' mental health problems and improving their quality of life. Specifically, there was a decrease in depression and harmful self-blame, and an increase in positive cognitive reframing among parents who participate. Quality of life improved in physical and psychological domains. To learn more about the project please contact project leader [Noriko Minamitani](#).



## News from Norway about Risk and Protective Factors

The project 'Academic functioning and high school dropout: The interplay of risk and protective factors' is entering its final year. The main aim of the project is to investigate how symptoms of depression in adolescence, as well as individual and family protective factors, are associated with school functioning and dropout from high school. So far results show that symptoms of depression, even at low levels, affect academic functioning, school absence, and dropout. About the protective factors: researchers have found that the family plays a vital role in late adolescence. Family cohesion is one of the most important protective factors for both boys and girls. Soon the research team will conduct focus groups with adolescents at risk of dropping out of high school, and with professionals in schools and health care services. A topic of the focus groups is how the project findings can best be understood, and how they can be used in a practical setting. Publications based on the work of the team will be listed among the Journal Articles on the [INSA-website](#). Media coverage and project summaries will also appear on the [My Country space for Norway](#). To learn more, contact [Kristin Gärtner Askeland](#).





## News from Norway about A Smart Phone Game

In October 2020 a smart phone game called [Habiit](#) was launched in Norway. It was designed to support children's mental health and school attendance. The release of Habiit followed 2.5 years of research and development conducted by researchers and students from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, and the University of Stavanger (UiS), in collaboration with the company Tackl. Habiit is developed to help children from 6 to 12 years build healthy habits by mapping their thoughts and feelings tied to daily routines. The game has a built-in positive reinforcement system with digital rewards connected to every routine. Read more about Habiit in [this article](#).

Habiit will be developed further, and the project group plans to research the game's effects on children's mental health and school attendance. The company and researchers hope to establish collaboration with researchers and practitioners outside of Norway. They welcome any expressions of interest from the INSA community, by contacting [Sindre Holme](#) or [Marikken Hoiseth](#).



## News from Spain

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of assessment instruments and methods to understand school attendance problems. What are the latest developments? And what are the strengths and limitations of these instruments and methods? Carolina González, from University of Alicante in Spain headed up a review of the characteristics of current instruments. A key finding was that most self-report instruments evaluate a student's symptoms, or the factors that maintain school attendance problems. Carolina and her colleagues call for more attention to the multiple levels of influence on school attendance problems, by placing the child within a 'nested framework of interacting systems'. So, new instruments could be designed to assess broader biopsychosocial or bioecological elements that affect school attendance. Research can then identify the relative impact of multiple influences on the development of school attendance problems. To learn more, [click here to access the article](#) or contact [Carolina González](#).

