



Announcing our last official year of the RAW Project! Wave 6 will be our last full wave of testing.

A lot has happened since our last newsletter. We hope you were able to cope with the many challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, we had a break in testing last year but were able to restart again relatively quickly. The time of year for testing for some families will have changed slightly due to the delay.

We are currently three quarters of the way through our 5th wave of testing, which is expected to finish in September this year. This means that all families have completed at least 4 years of testing and most of the families have completed their 5th wave. Even though last year was a challenging year for many, we still retained most of our original participants (80-85%). Thank you for your continued support of this important research!

Later this year we will start our 6th and final (official) wave of testing. Like wave 5, it will only include the questionnaires and phone interviews – so once again there will be NO face-to-face lab session at Macquarie University.

To capture the whole high school experience, and for completeness, we are planning to send a shortened parent and child questionnaire a year after your wave 6 testing. Unfortunately, as RAW will have officially concluded and we will have run out of funding, we will not be able to provide any payment for the questionnaire, but we hope some families are willing to help us one final time. More details will be provided before the official completion of the RAW Project in August next year.

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This newsletter will include some important information regarding the continuation of the RAW Project, insights from the RAW data, results from the most recent RAW competitions, an awesome explanation of our eye tracking research from Dr Ella Oar, and a list of our published research articles.



Have Your Contact Details Changed?

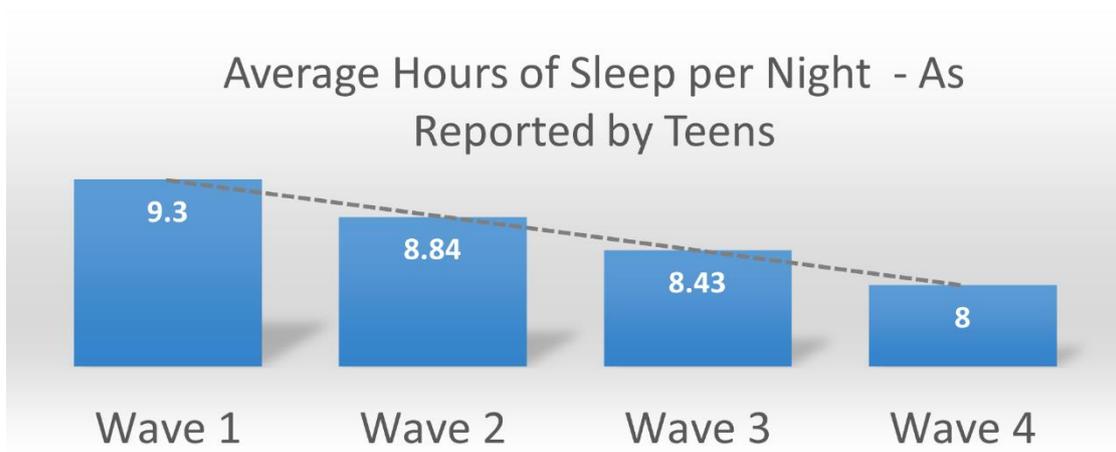
If they have, please update us by emailing your new details to rawproject@mq.edu.au or contact our office on (02) 9850 4080.

New RAW Project Data Insights

In wave 4, the RAW participants' ages ranged from 13 to 15, with an average age of 14 years.

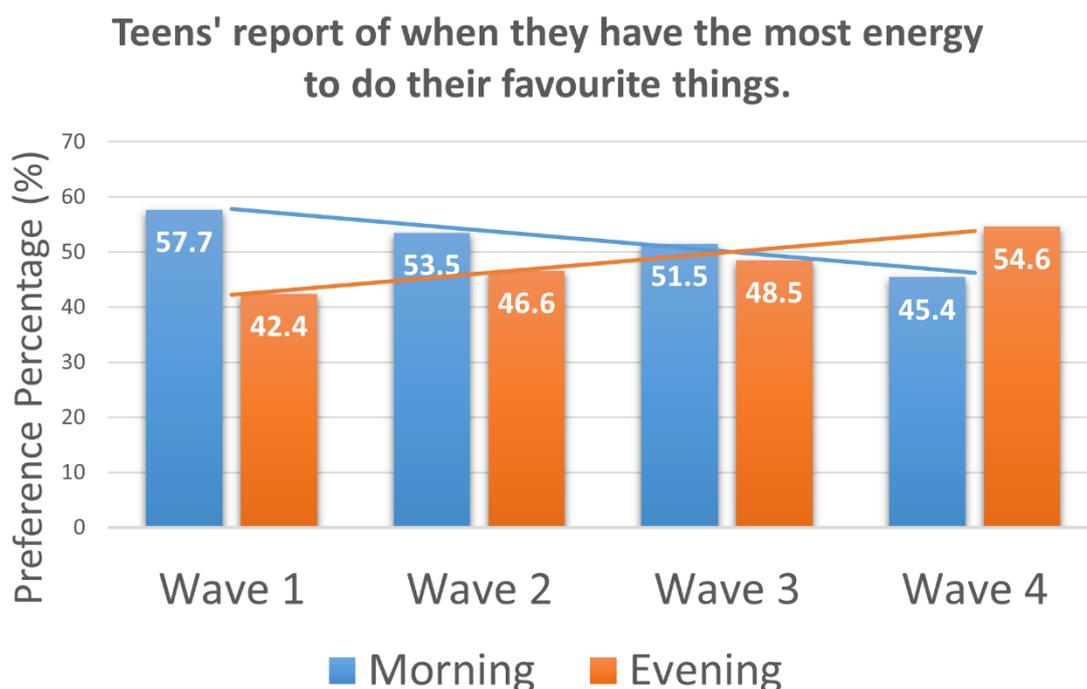
Sleep

While RAW teens are still getting a good amount of sleep, on average, there is a clear downward trend in the hours of sleep they get on weeknights. This trend is expected, and is likely to continue.



Energy to do things in the morning and evening

One question we ask teens is about when they have the most energy to do their favourite things. The wave 4 data reveals a clear trend reversal. When the teens were younger, they tended to have more energy in the morning but in wave 4 teens preference the evening. We expect this trend to continue as they develop into adulthood.

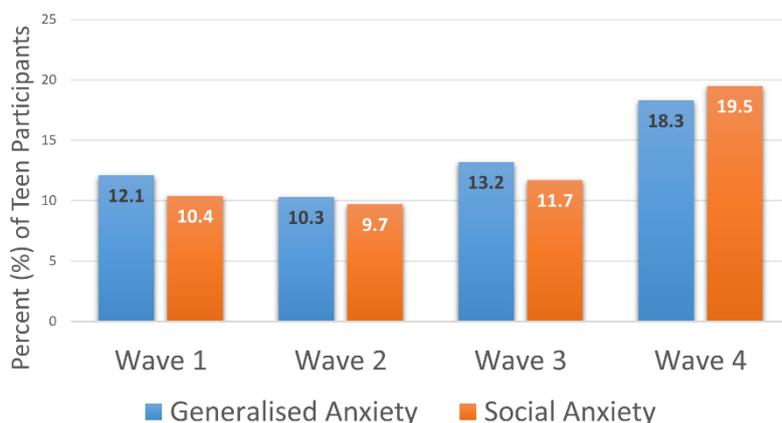


Mental Health

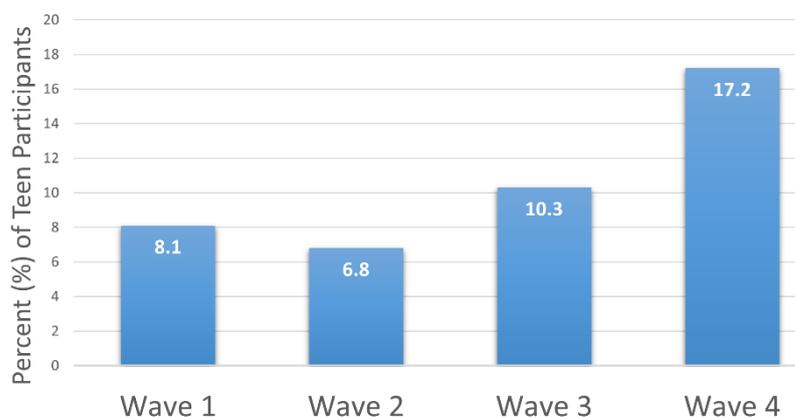
In general, the teens on the RAW project report low levels of mental health symptoms. The data below suggests that some mental health symptoms are increasing. This is expected in the teen years. The increase in mental health symptoms, which we see across many cultures, is the reason we are conducting the RAW Project – to understand the risk and protective factors for mental health outcomes in adolescence.

From our questionnaire data, we continue to see an increase in the number of teens reporting elevated symptoms of generalised anxiety (e.g., excessive worrying) and social anxiety (e.g., excessive worries about being negatively evaluated by others). These symptoms tend to be more common as adolescents progress through the teenage years.

Teen Participants with Elevated Levels of Symptoms Associated with Generalised Anxiety and Social Anxiety



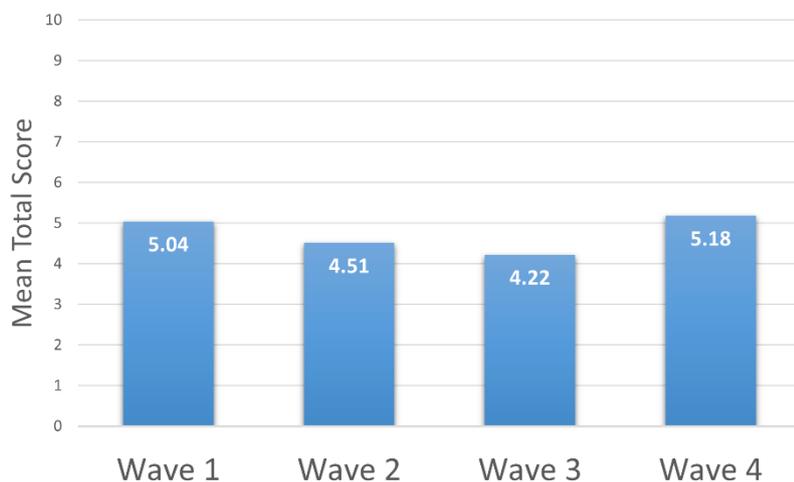
Teen Participants with Elevated Levels of Symptoms Associated with Depression



In our last newsletter, we predicted that we would continue to see an increase in teens reporting symptoms associated with depression (e.g., excessive and persistent low mood, loss of interest in activities). This prediction was correct with an approximate 7% increase in the number of teens reporting these symptoms in wave 4.

We continue to see that negative eating attitudes in teens is relatively low and stable. This suggests that, as a group, their attitudes towards eating are not changing significantly over time.

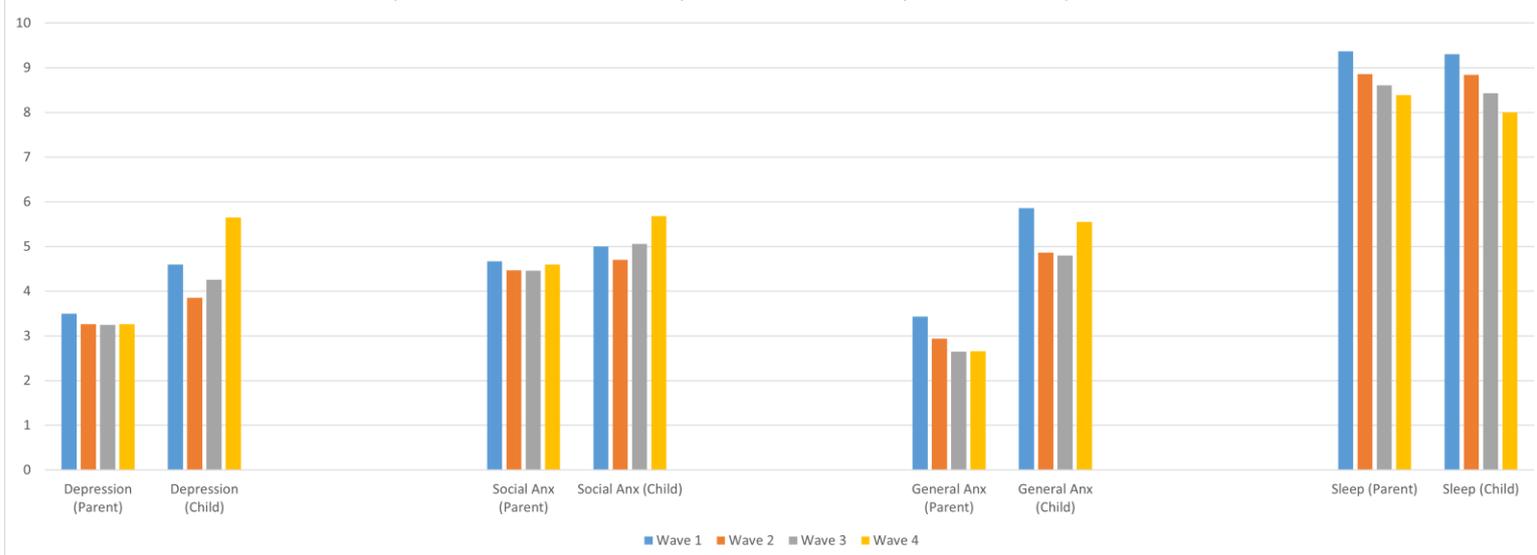
Negative Eating Attitudes of Teen Participants



Comparison of Parent and Child Reports of Mental Health Symptoms and Sleep

The RAW team thought it might be interesting to compare your and your child's ratings of some of the things we focus on in each year of the project. The chart below shows parent and child reports of the child's mental health symptoms and sleep over the last four years. We found that parents were pretty good at judging how much sleep their children were getting, and also their level of anxiety in social situations. In contrast, parents were less accurate in predicting their child's level of depressive and generalised anxiety symptoms. These differences might be explained by the fact that as teenagers get older, they tend to become more independent from parents and are more likely to confide in their friends. Thus, parents have less insight into their child's internal feelings but can more readily observe their sleep patterns and anxiety symptoms when in interacting in social situations.

Comparison of Parent and Child Report of Mental Health Symptoms and Sleep over 4 Waves



RAW Q&A

Oliver – Interview Clinician



Saba – RAW Participant



What is your role in the RAW Project and why did you join?

I call everyone up and conduct the interviews! The project originally caught my eye because I saw it as a really important area of research that I relished the chance to be able to contribute to. Also, I was really looking for a project that I would be able to develop my own skills going forward and so far I've learned so much in RAW!

Initially it was because mum said to, but I think the \$100 voucher motivated me a little more as I got older!

Do you have any hobbies or do you like to do anything in your spare time?

I've been skiing since I was little and I try to take any chance I get on the mountain during the winter. I picked up golf a few years ago and I play that once a week with some mates but I'm still so bad at it! Other than that I like to read, socialise with friends and exercise, I've just started swimming again recently and I've been loving it.

I am most definitely a shopaholic, I am obsessed with perfecting my closet. That's definitely a number 1 hobby.

What do you want to be when you grow up/ what did you want to be when you were at school?

I wanted to be an AFL footballer when I was in primary school but I'm still waiting for the call... Then in high school I got the idea of becoming a Psychologist and I haven't looked back.

My career choices tend to change a lot but I think I always wanted to be in the spotlight whether it be acting or being some sort of influencer. But as of right now I'm working on getting into beauty therapy. let's hope it does not change again.

What is the most embarrassing thing that has happened to you recently?

A couple years back I was running late and I was in a rush to run out of my house and jump in an Uber. I ran outside and jumped in the car and said hi to the driver, only to realise that I had gotten into my neighbours car with them in it – whoops!

The most embarrassing thing that I have done recently was probably tripping over right in front of a famous guy that I didn't know was famous until I got told as I walked off.

Who do you look up to / who is an idol of yours and why?

Adam Goodes. He was always my favourite player back when he was playing in the AFL but he became a real idol of mine after seeing the way he stood firm in his beliefs and his expressions of Indigenous culture following the adversity he faced for his anti-racism advocacy. He's done a lot for Australia, in the future I think we'll look back at the actions he took as really important moments in our nation's history.

I definitely idolise Harry Styles.. bless his soul, I admire that he OWNS who he is which is such an admirable quality, I also have to say he must be one of the kindest human beings out + his songs have gotten me through so much.

What is the cheesiest joke you know?

I have too many ... what do you call an alligator wearing a vest? An Investigator.

I barely know any jokes but I remember a cheesy joke that a legal sub once said that has stuck with me, "What do lawyers wear?... Lawsuits"

RAW Competition Winners

2020 RAW Poem Competition Winners

In late 2020 we invited all RAW teens to write a poem about their experiences of 2020, the good and bad. We had a fantastic response and received many poems. We have a very talented bunch of writers in our group. Congratulations to Zavier, the winner of the competition and honourable mentions to the runners up, Ria and Shirley.

Zavier

2020

People sick, people crying
People on the streets are dying.
Sorrow in the world is plenty
What a year is 2020.
It has no discretion, I've been told
The virus hits the young and old.
Complaining, whining, moaning too
Is something we have NO right to do.
We have to stop the 'what about me?'
The big picture we must see.
The virus was sadly man made
The cost we all have paid.
An antidote is what we need
To slow the virus and its speed.
Stop and think then scream and shout
'We have to stamp this virus out!!!!'
2021 is almost here
Let this be the virus free year.

2020 Wrapped Up

We ran out of water. Then the country caught fire.

Clearly the situation was already pretty dire
But then we Aussies couldn't catch a break
If only 2020 was a year we could retake

Our lives were overtaken by a foreign disease
Where in public you were too scared to even sneeze

In the blink of an eye, we were stuck in quarantine

Our households turned into a crazy scene

With nothing to do, we lay around lonely and bored

We were left with absolutely nothing to look toward

Couldn't see our friends, couldn't participate in sports

Our parents continued to worry about school reports

The stress from school and home was overwhelming

The urge to give up on everything was rather compelling

Some days were too slow, others gone way too fast

It's shocking that 2020 has already nearly passed.

Coronavirus has become a battle on a global scale

The infection rates at times are completely off the rails

The healthcare and essential workers are our soldiers

They hold the weight of the world on their shoulders

Scientists from every nation continue to study this virus

Their dedication to this field continues to inspire us

People from all walks of life are desperate for a cure

But until then, the world will must continue to endure

There's no doubt 2020 has been a crazy year
The future of Australia, of all nations, remains unclear

But if this year has taught us even one thing

It's that we Australian's can get through anything

Here's to Twenty Plenty

Two thousand and twenty, more like two thousand and plenty
Plenty of ups and downs, Plenty of smiles and frowns

The year started off, just like any other I was in China with my sister, father and mother
But all of a sudden some news rang about A new disease,
Coronavirus had broken out! So we jetted off fast to our home down under
It wasn't easy though, there were many ' a blunder
But home safe and sound-or so i thought
Face masks and sanitisers were things that we bought!

Online school wasn't rough, with friends on call
But no more could i go to the park or the mall I took up baking-
social media made me to do it First time with macarons and we almost blew it!

Daily news and media we caught up with a lot,
Friends and family we caught up with- well actually not
Crafts galore and furniture building,
Going out we needed some extra shielding

Back in person we finally, went to our educational institution
Exams were confusing and brought much confusion
Extracurriculars on zoom were still lots of fun
Except without swimming- I've missed lots of sun!

Netflix would serve, as my weekend starters,
Followed by big breakfast as a family, and the latest data(s) I found a new talent!
Zooming through each series I've watched Friends, Gossip Girl and more, if those were your queries
Christmas means a lot; binge watching the Grinch,
But also being with loved ones, though it hasn't been a sinch

Facetimes and calling has been a blast
But just like that the year's gone by fast
And as twenty plenty - a new decade, went off with quite a bang

There's lots of people and things, i still have to thank
My family and friends, who stuck through it all
My teachers and school, who still stood tall, And for y'all at Raw, thank you so much
For adding this as a finishing touch

This year: You weren't always the best
But so many times, you were better than the rest
Memories we made were more than a lot
And the summer that's coming is already quite hot
But here's to you year two thousand and twenty
May everyone have a Merry Christmas and their new year
Be full of happiness a'plenty

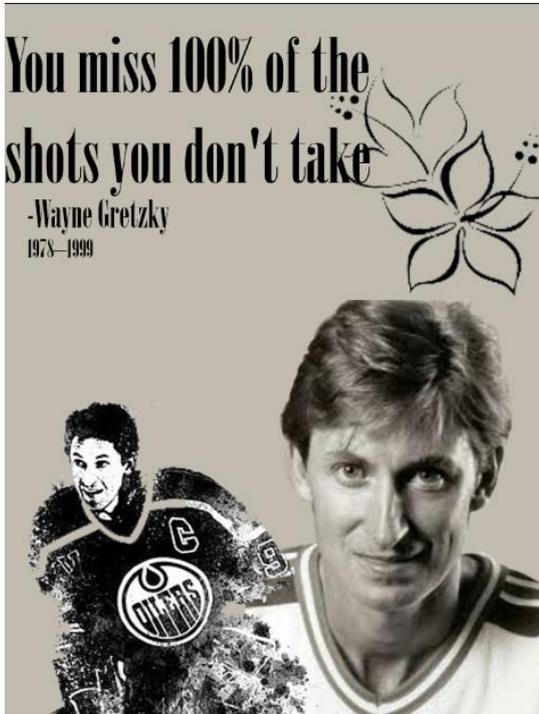
The RAW Inspirational Quote Competition

Thank you to all the participants who entered the recent inspirational quote competition. We received 25 entries and all of them were fantastic! We could tell a lot of thought and

consideration went into creating them. It was probably the hardest competition we have voted on as ALL of the entries were strong contenders – so thank you for your efforts. We will be posting the quotes on our Facebook pages over the coming weeks so keep your eye out for them.

Congratulations to 1st place, Dylan, who wins a \$100 voucher, and a special mention to Karina and Ria, the two runners-up.

Dylan



This means a lot to many people including myself because it tells me I should do things and if I don't I will most likely regret it.

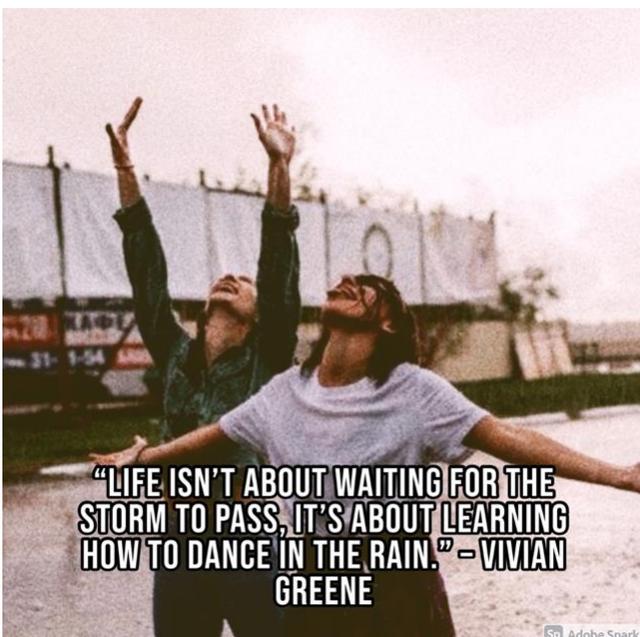
Karina



I chose Oscar Wilde's quote "Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future" because it conveys a message of kindness and mindfulness that just because someone appears a certain way, it does not mean that this is the truth of who they are as a person.

Every sinner has the opportunity to repent and "walk the path of virtue". This quote also inspires me because I am fascinated by Oscar Wilde and the circumstances of his life, and this quote is highly applicable to who he was as a person in terms of his theories and philosophies.

Ria



Sometimes, life's storms have a way of making us place our lives on hold, waiting for the right moment to carry on. This quote inspires and challenges me, by presenting me with two options. I can choose to live my life, hiding away, always afraid and avoiding what life hurls in my direction. Or I can continue, even in the wildest of storms, embracing the difficulties for what they are while learning and growing and finding pleasure in even the smallest things. It's a privilege to have strong-willed role models in my life who make this choice an easy one.

Follow the RAW Project on Facebook!



The RAW Project is on FB! Follow us to keep up to date with news and events. We regularly post articles about teen wellbeing. Please like our page to find out more, and share it with family and friends!

Go to: www.facebook.com/RAWProjectCEH | Or via the handle [@RAWProjectCEH](https://www.facebook.com/RAWProjectCEH)

Research Highlight

Cutting edge eye tracking findings – Explanation by Dr Ella Oar

In the highlight below, Dr Ella Oar describes an interesting finding from the wave 1 eye tracking data which challenges current psychological theories of attention biases in people with anxiety.

Psychology theories propose that anxious children and adults are on the lookout for danger in their environment. For example, these theories would suggest that when chatting with friends a socially anxious person might be on the lookout for signs that the people they are talking to are uninterested or bored (e.g., yawning, glancing away or staring at the ground). Support for these theories have been found in experimental studies with adults while in kids the evidence is much more mixed. This may be because existing studies have only very small samples (< 150 children).

We wanted to examine this in the RAW data. As a first step, we decided to look at children's data in their first year of participating when they were 11 years old. As you may remember, each year the children completed an eye tracking task during their lab session where we showed them pairs of faces (e.g., angry face and neutral face) of children who were the same gender and age as themselves.

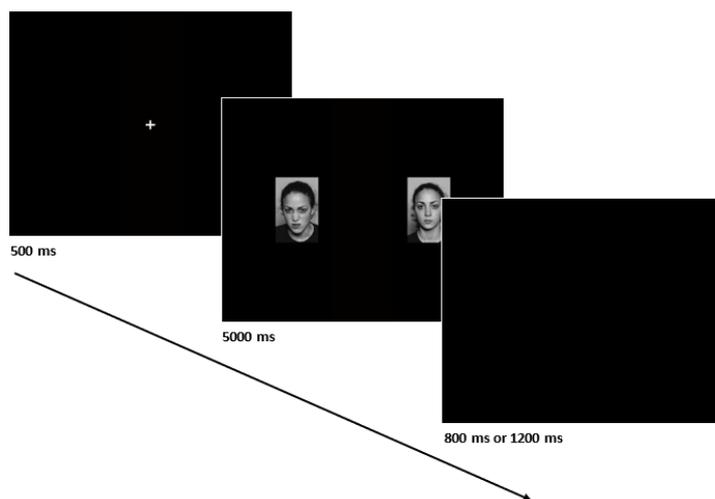


Figure 1. Experimental Trial Sequence

We predicted that anxious children would look at the angry faces faster and for longer than non-anxious children. Four hundred and sixty-three (92 = Anxious and 371 = Non-Anxious Controls) RAW children completed the eye tracking task. Unexpectedly, we found no differences between the anxious and non-anxious children. Interestingly, we did however find that all kids focused on angry faces much faster than neutral faces. This might suggest that focusing on danger (e.g., in particular in response to an angry peer face) might be common to all kids at this age.

To date, the RAW study includes the largest sample worldwide of young people and uses cutting edge eye tracking technology to assess differences in attention between anxious and non-anxious kids. It is important as researchers have recently begun to develop new treatments which train anxious children to focus their attention away from danger. This study will inform their work. Our next step is to look at subsequent years of the RAW data and determine whether this finding remains the same or if anxiety related differences emerge as kids become older and are better able to focus and control their attention. We cannot wait to see what we find!

Useful Resources

Websites — Find Out More About Mental Health and Wellbeing

<https://au.reachout.com/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au>

<https://headspace.org.au/>

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Our Research

We have published several new scientific papers with the RAW data since the last newsletter. The research includes, understanding the relationship between coping styles and mental health in preadolescent children; testing a model of social anxiety in preadolescence; how comparisons on social media platforms are linked to mental health; and the psychological impact of COVID-19 and the associated lockdowns on adolescents.

We have a few papers that are under review and many more that are being worked on. We look forward to sharing those findings with you in the next newsletter.

You can find a link to the abstracts of our published articles below. If you would like more information, please get in touch.

[Magson, N. R., Freeman, J. Y., Rapee, R. M., Richardson, C. E., Oar, E. L., & Fardouly, J. \(2021\). Risk and protective factors for prospective changes in adolescent mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 50\(1\), 44-57.](#)

[Fardouly, J., Magson, N. R., Rapee, R. M., Johnco, C. J., & Oar, E. L. \(2020\). The use of social media by Australian preadolescents and its links with mental health. *Journal of clinical psychology*, 76\(7\), 1304-1326.](#)

[Rapee, R. M., Forbes, M. K., Oar, E. L., Richardson, C. E., Johnco, C. J., Magson, N. R., & Fardouly, J. \(2020\). Testing a concurrent model of social anxiety in preadolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 44\(6\), 505-514.](#)

[Richardson, C. E., Magson, N. R., Fardouly, J., Oar, E. L., Forbes, M. K., Johnco, C. J., & Rapee, R. M. \(2020\). Longitudinal associations between coping strategies and psychopathology in pre-adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 1-16.](#)

[Magson, N. R., Rapee, R. M., Fardouly, J., Forbes, M. K., Richardson, C. E., Johnco, C. J., & Oar, E. L. \(2019\). Measuring repetitive negative thinking: Development and validation of the Persistent and Intrusive Negative Thoughts Scale \(PINTS\). *Psychological assessment*.](#)

[Magson, N. R., Oar, E. L., Fardouly, J., Johnco, C. J., & Rapee, R. M. \(2019\). The Preteen Perfectionist: An Evaluation of the Perfectionism Social Disconnection Model. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 1-15.](#)

[Richardson, C., Oar, E., Fardouly, J., Magson, N., Johnco, C., Forbes, M., & Rapee, R. \(2019\). The Moderating Role of Sleep in the Relationship Between Social Isolation and Internalising Problems in Early Adolescence. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 1-10.](#)

[Fardouly, J., Magson, N. R., Johnco, C. J., Oar, E. L., & Rapee, R. M. \(2018\). Parental control of the time preadolescents spend on social media: Links with preadolescents' social media appearance comparisons and mental health. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 47\(7\), 1456-1468.](#)

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