



# RAP NEWS

## THE RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

September 2009

Visit [www.raprogram.org](http://www.raprogram.org)

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### Our Mission

*The Recognition and Prevention (RAP) Program was established January of 1998. It is a research clinic funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Its mission is to prevent the development of serious mental illness and to promote healthy functioning.*

### Program Updates

It has been a while since the last edition of *RAP News* has reached your mailbox. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you about the many new projects happening at the RAP Program that have been keeping us so busy.

First, and most important, the RAP Program has been maintaining and actually strengthening its leadership role in the field of prevention. We have received federal grant support for two important new projects. The first of these will allow us to add new procedures, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRIs) and electroencephalographs (EEG's) that will further our insight into how the brain develops and why youngsters begin to experience emotional and functional difficulties. A second new project involves identifying risk factors for the development of Bipolar Disorder.

We also continue to work hard on studying healthy adolescent development. We are always looking for healthy participants ages 12-25 to complete clinical interviews, cognitive tests, and periodic follow-up evaluations. All participants are compensated for their time and effort in research procedures.

Our multi-family group, a new treatment option at the RAP Program that is part of a research project, continues to be a great tool for families to support one another and tackle everyday issues together. If you are looking for a new type of treatment, one that your parents can also join, that may help you and your family members understand each other better, then multi-family group may be just what you are looking for.

### Meet Our New Staff

New initiatives have resulted in many staff additions. We are excited to introduce our new staff members!

**Psychiatrists:** Claudine Higdon, M.D. attended medical school at Columbia University. She completed both her adult and child residency trainings at LIJ. Irmgard Borner, M.D. attended medical school at the University of Kiel in Germany. She completed both her adult and child residency trainings and is an Associate Professor at Downstate University Medical Center.

**Clinicians:** Kristin Candan, Ph.D. and Jaime Moffett, LMSW are both full time clinicians conducting individual, family, and group psychotherapy. Dr. Candan received her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Jaime is a graduate of Fordham University School of Social Work.

**Research Staff:** Gary Brucato, Ph.D. received his Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the New School for Social Research. As Outreach Coordinator, Dr. Brucato is in charge of organizing and implementing presentations about early intervention in the community, schools, and clinical settings. Ricardo Carrion, Ph.D. received his Doctorate in General Psychology from Rutgers University. Dr. Carrion is responsible for coordinating our new EEG lab. Doreen Olvet, Ph.D., received her Doctoral degree in Biopsychology from Stony Brook University. Dr. Olvet is responsible for coordinating the MRI portion of a large multi-site study and working on the new Bipolar Disorder project.

**Coordinators:** Tricia Taylor, B.A. and Christian Fyfe, B.S. are full-time research coordinators. They both participate in a variety of tasks related to the various projects underway at RAP.

### State of the Art New Procedures



**EEG:** An EEG is a safe procedure that has been used for years in research to look at the brain activity of infants, children, and adults. A stretch cap, similar to a swimming cap, with sensors will be placed on your head to record the electroencephalograph (EEG). The sensors will not touch your scalp; instead, a small amount of water-based gel is placed in between your scalp and each sensor to receive the signal from the brain. Then you will be asked to push a button when you hear a sound or see a picture while your brain activity is recorded.

**MRI:** An MRI is a machine that uses magnetic fields to take pictures of the brain. The participant is placed on a narrow bed and then slid into a tunnel. The participant will hear a loud tapping noise, but he/she can wear earplugs to reduce the noise. During the scan, the participant can talk to study staff.



All participants are compensated \$75 for their time and effort while participating in each of these procedures. We are happy to provide participants with a tour of our new equipment.

### Ask Dr. RAP

Dear Dr. RAP,

Lately I've noticed that I've gained some weight. My appetite has increased and I find myself going overboard with junk food. What can I do to return to my normal weight?

Thanks, Sweet Tooth

Dear Sweet Tooth,

I am glad to hear that you are interested in tackling your weight gain. My advice may sound familiar, but the best way to maintain a healthy weight is through a balanced diet and exercise.

Eating right is hard with so much delicious temptation out there, but here are some helpful tips. Always start the day off with breakfast as this will help prevent you from consuming larger amounts of food later in the day. Avoid sugary drinks and stick to water! Also, keep healthy snacks in your home and take them with you when you go places like the movies and on long car rides.



Adolescents should be getting at least 60 minutes of exercise daily! Organized sports are always a good way to get exercise. Other ideas include taking your family pet for a daily walk, taking the stairs instead of elevators, biking, renting and using an exercise DVD from the library, rollerblading, and mowing the lawn. The key is to exercise regularly and make it fun!

Ask your therapist for the new RAP Healthy Living Guide. It is full of easy to implement tips for eating right and exercising.

Sincerely, Dr. RAP

### RAP Program Follow-Ups

Completing routine follow-ups is one of our main goals at the RAP Program. It is important for us to keep in touch with everyone who passes through our program, to follow how they are doing, and to hear about where their lives have taken them. Follow-ups are completely voluntary, and you do get compensated for your time.

If you haven't heard from us, we may not have your correct phone number. If you have not been contacted, please call Dr. Rita Barsky at (718) 470-8046.

### Creativity Corner

#### Artistic Contribution from a RAP Program Member

##### *My Road to Happiness*

*This road is not to a wizard  
But to an angel called Happiness  
I'm not in a blue dress  
or have pigtails in my hair  
I have no red shoes to take me there  
I have a dog who is called Hope  
He travels in my arms always*

*My road is not yellow, but gray  
Not bricks, but stones*

*Along this road Faith, Courage, and Love  
Come find me*

*We continue down the road  
And reach the end to be told  
that all I needed was them to find  
What I always had, but never noticed*

If you would like to see your artistic contribution in the next edition please submit materials to Dr. Candan at [kcandan@nshs.edu](mailto:kcandan@nshs.edu).

### RAP Outreach and Education

With the receipt of a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, we are expanding our efforts to implement prevention in the community at large. A major part of that effort involves community education and outreach with individuals and groups who work with young people and families. This involves education about ways to improve the recognition of early warning signs of mental illness and includes discussions of new approaches to prevention.

To help us with our planning, we welcome your feedback. Feel free to contact Gary Brucato, Ph.D. at (718) 470-8536 with:

- Comments, questions or suggestions.
- To schedule an educational outreach session.
- For information about our upcoming continuing education series.
- For reading material about our program, our resources, and the early warning signs of mental illness.

### CONGRATULATIONS

We are proud to report that this year we celebrate the graduations of 10 current RAP Program members from Middle School, High School, and College.

Additionally, we have one Valedictorian and one scholarship winner!

**We look forward to hearing about many more of your accomplishments in the upcoming school year!**

