



A Rites of Passage Framework for Fostering Social and Emotional Learning in Adolescent Boys

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The developmental shifts encountered by boys during adolescence can have long-term implications for mental health. This paper describes a holistic approach to wellbeing and development (the On Queenslea Drive, or OQD, program), which draws upon a traditional Rites of Passage framework to support the development of boys during this period. This approach draws upon a boy's entire community to help him reflect and learn the skills needed to empower him to take his next steps in life. To provide a preliminary evaluation of this approach, 12 staff members involved in implementing the program in one school reflected upon their experiences and their perspectives on its impact on boys' development. Data were collected via regular journal entries and a survey. Results indicated that the program was perceived to have a positive impact in several areas, including relationships with parents, relationships with peers, and relationships and understanding of young women in the community. The program was also seen to increase independence through teaching the boys essential life skills. Boys' social and emotional vocabulary was noted also to grow while they were engaged in the program. Implications for enhancing the efficacy of the program long-term, and extending it to other contexts, are considered.

Introduction

Traditionally, secondary schools have focussed primarily on identifying ways to enhance their practices with respect to curriculum, pedagogy, and academic development. In the last decade, however, the competitive environment of school systems and demands from the broader community have seen schools take more responsibility for the holistic development of their students. In response to such demands, secondary schools now routinely include mentorship of students within the mental health and emotional wellbeing space. This broader space can include

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specific skill domains such as life skills (e.g., cooking, ironing, washing); relationship skills (including with peers, parents, and other members of the community); and approaches to personal growth and reflection (e.g., mindfulness, gratitude, and journaling). In society today, therefore, secondary schools are more broadly considered to be institutions that prepare adolescents for their roles in the community, and, for their economic futures. Given the increased priority afforded to such skill types within schools, a plethora of frameworks have now appeared with respect to how this can best be achieved.

Fasick (1988) offered that high schools also operate as places where young people transition from childhood to adulthood. In other words, this framework depicts the developmental period encompassed by the high school years as a ‘rite of passage’. Formal rites of passage programs are common in many societies to assist community members through the transitions or stages of life, such as birth, adolescence, adulthood, eldership, and even death. Through the symbolic rituals of rites of passage, the young person acquires skills, norms, values, community expectations, and secrets that prepare him/her to accept and participate in his/her role as a responsible adult within the society (Fasick, 1988; Mbiti, 1970; Van Gennep, 1908).

In Western Australia, Christ Church Grammar School (Perth, Western Australia) has developed a novel program based on a rites of passage framework. This holistic approach to wellbeing and development (the On Queenslea Drive, or OQD, program) draws upon a boy’s entire community to help him reflect and learn the skills needed to empower him to take his next steps in life. The aims of the current paper were to (i) describe elements of the OQD program, to enhance knowledge sharing across schools; and (ii) to provide a preliminary evaluation of this approach. In the next sections, key concepts underpinning the notion of rites of passage and social-emotional learning are discussed. The OQD program is then described. The methods and results obtained in the preliminary evaluation of the OQD conducted by the author are then presented.

The notion of rites of passage

Historically, the notion of rites of passage has received much attention in the field of anthropology (Van Gennep, 1908; Vizedom, 1976). In many cultures throughout the world, formalized rites of passage are integral to community life. In fact, the identities of individuals are intimately linked to the community sponsored rituals and ceremonies for life's transitions. These rituals or ceremonies were first termed rites of passage by the Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in 1908. In his study, the rite of passage or initiation was the transition from childhood into adulthood.

In one widely accepted, more recent definition, Brookins and Robinson (1995) defined rites of passage as "functional group processes designed to structure and bring meaning to the various transition stages of human life" (p. 174-175). Aligned with this broad definition, Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) more recently proposed an operational definition of this construct, which identified 20 key elements required to devise and execute a rite of passage program that will have a positive impact on holistic development and wellbeing. These 20 elements will be revisited in this paper in the discussion section.

Piert (2007) stated that "in many African cultures, rite of passage for adolescence or puberty marked the point at which the child became an adult" (p. 171). This initiation referred to the moment that communities would entrust their sacred history and secrets to young people (Delaney, 1995; Mbiti, 1970; Warfield-Coppock, 1992), as well as the process by which these young people learned the roles and responsibilities of adulthood. Piert (2007) explained that in some African societies, "persons who do not experience this initiation, are not considered adults, or full members of that society" (p.171). While views on rites of passage may differ somewhat across cultures, similar views have been expressed also in Western cultures. In Australia, for example, Rubenstein (2005) reported that small groups of men have been running rite of passage programs for boys since 1995.

Within these rites of passage programs, there are always mentors / elders that assist and guide the boys through the program. The role of the mentor

/elder is to help these young men understand who they are as individuals, and what their role will be in the community. Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) state that:

Those who are initiators of youth's coming of age need training and professional development to build their personal awareness and resources. Individuals need to undergo their own initiatory experience and rite of passage to aid his or her transition to maturity to be an effective initiator of youth (p.44).

In today's Western culture, life transitions are given less formal attention and many individuals will thus experience similar events incidentally. This can lend to the adoption of inappropriate role models and mentors, as well as making the transition traumatic for some boys. Groth (2007), for example, commented that "in Western cultures, rites of passage to manhood are not formal, ceremonial events involving groups of boys. Instead for the most part, each boy faces his ordeal alone" (p. 7).

The liminal stage of rites of passage

Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) encourage the use of a rite of passage as an essential framework to promote positive youth and community development and assist adolescents in transitioning through the liminal stage. The liminal stage is ritualistic and often initiated by an event (Beech, 2011). Beech (2011, as cited in Dukes 2018) stated that for an adolescent, an event can be entering high school, gaining a driver's license, or beginning their first job. From the event, the liminal stage is conducted in a specific place for a specific length of time. Within the specificities of this space and time-period, individuals are assigned a temporary social status exempting them from normal duties and activities (Marshall et al., 2018). This is an important stage because it enables the individual to proceed through the transition phase and re-enter society at a higher social status (Marshall et al., 2018; Turner, 1994). As adolescents search to locate their new status, this momentary status can cause them to experience communicative alienation (Marshall et al., 2018).

Marshall et al. (2018) describe communicative alienation as “a feeling of disassociation from others and an inability to relate to anyone not in the liminal stage” (p. 1). For adolescents, this may be a troubling stage. The adolescent years represent a time when key developmental tasks such as finding a clear purpose and identity or separating from parents/guardians must be fulfilled within the journey from childhood to adulthood (Marshall et al., 2018). Stone et al. (2018, as cited in Dukes 2018) said that adolescence is a developmental period identified by the complex physical, social, emotional, and cognitive changes, which can push adolescents to engage in more self-exploratory processes. In particular, individuals within the 10–21 age year period begin to crave more autonomy, responsibility, and decision-making opportunities to participate in more activities separate from the adults in their lives (Stone et al., 2018).

The potential for negative influences in informal rites of passage

There is an African proverb that states, ‘If we do not initiate our young men into manhood, they will burn down the village just to feel the heat.’ Existing research provides substantial support for the implementation of structured rites of passage during adolescence (Karianjahi, 2015; Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). As noted previously, the absence of a clearly defined rite of passage can lead adolescents to create their own rites of passage, which may ultimately have damaging or traumatising effects on the individual (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010; Karianjahi, 2015). For example, initiation into a gang (or the wrong crowd) is likely to become more attractive for an adolescent who does not recognise a more positive path to adulthood (Karianjahi, 2015). Adolescents may thus create their own key events that they believe mark their transition into adulthood, including teenage pregnancy, physical violence, drug use, excessive drinking, or other risky behaviours (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). As an adolescent enters the liminal stage, therefore, a well-developed rite of passage should be in place to create a sense of belonging in a community of positive practices, as well as to learn life and human skills, and exercise healthy independent choices (Larson & Martin, 2012).

Blumenkrantz (1994) explains that:

A modern-day rite of passage is achieved when parents and the community create and participate in experiences which are perceived to be transformative by youth and, in fact, offer them increased status within the community and facilitate their healthy transition through adolescence (p. 21).

Blum and Libbey (2004, as cited in Kim et al., 2015) wrote that many teenagers in modern society lack the social and emotional competencies needed to contribute positively to their communities, and thus become less connected to school as they progress from primary school to high school. This lack of connection can have a negative effect on their academic performance, behaviour, and health. However, schools are uniquely positioned to offer positive rites of passage experiences to their students. For example, in most schools across Australia, there are outdoor education programs that involve some nights away from the school, camping, completing outdoor education activities. Such extracurricular programs provide ideal settings for rite of passage activities to occur. By including all the elements in a rite of passage within a school outdoor education program, the camp can be turned into transformational experiences that have broad-reaching benefits on students' holistic development.

The importance of social and emotional learning in adolescence

In Australia, social and emotional learning (SEL) programs are currently being implemented in most schools at some level. Durlak (2015) said there is a growing belief that SEL is of at least equal importance for children as the learning of mainstream traditional subjects in the educational setting. Durlak et al. (2011, as cited in Robinson et al., 2020) stated that studies have shown that school-based SEL programs can contribute to the development of social competencies, emotional self-awareness, improved resilience, and academic learning. These programs have, however, been met with varying success. There are several challenges to implementing SEL programs in schools, including program cost, competing demands, and content that is predetermined and cannot be tailored to individual classroom needs (Lawson et al., 2019).

In the view of the present author, Australia needs to spend more time not only building the social and emotional skills of teenagers, but also in establishing safe, caring environments that include peer and family initiatives, as well as whole-school community building activities (Cook et al., 1999; Hawkins et al., 2004; Schaps, Battistich. & Solomon, 2004). Together, these elements may help to ‘build’ the whole person, fostering the development of teenagers who feel valued and motivated to be their best selves. These elements can also help teenagers to develop a powerful skill set of social and emotional skills that will not only facilitate their academic performance, but also foster their development into respectful, resilient young people who engage in healthier behaviours and make healthier life decisions (Greenberg et al., 2003). Programs based on rites of passage provide an excellent framework for addressing these broader educational goals.

A small number of programs are already in use within Australian schools which draw upon a rite of passage framework. For example, the Rite Journey program described by Lines and Gallasch (2009) is based broadly upon a rites of passage framework. This program is designed to allow “Australian Year-9 male students aged 14-15 years to share a year-long partnership with a teacher-guide as the boy explores what it means to become a respectful and responsible man.” (p.74). While the Rite Journey incorporates some elements of the rite of passage framework, it does not do this comprehensively. Furthermore, its efficacy may be hampered by the fact that it is delivered inside the normal school timetable. The depth of reflection and the time and space needed to create transformational change may, therefore, not be achieved because the activities must be conducted within a normal school day. Another complex issue with the Rite Journey approach involves finding the right teachers to act as guides for individual students – as acknowledged by Lines and Gallasch (2009), the efficacy of this approach is heavily dependent upon having authentic people to teach its content.

In Australia, individual schools have also embraced the notion of rites of passage in somewhat different ways to the approach taken in the Rite Journey. One such school is Christ Church Grammar School (Perth,

Western Australia), that has developed its own rites of passage program. This holistic approach to wellbeing and development (the On Queenslea Drive, or OQD, program), draws upon a traditional Rites of Passage framework to support the development of boys during adolescence. The approach draws upon a boy's entire community to help him reflect and learn the skills needed to empower him to take his next steps in life. The program runs over 16 days by specially trained staff, outside the school's academic timetable (not within it). While such locally developed programs have the potential to have positive impacts on students' development, many of these will not be evaluated formally by the schools in which they were developed. This necessarily limits not only the transfer of such programs across cognate schools, but also, hampers efforts to engage in continuous quality improvement within the programs.

Description of the OQD Program

The first aim of the current paper was to describe elements of the OQD program, to enhance knowledge sharing across schools. At Christ Church Grammar School (CCGS), building young men of good character, giving boys the opportunity to reflect and realise who they want to be in the world, and empowering them to make healthy and informed decisions, is a core focus of the school. In 2018, CCGS introduced the On Queenslea Drive (OQD) program as their rite of passage program for Year 9 boys. OQD is based on a rites of passage framework, in which a boy is separated from his family community to reflect and learn different skills to empower him to take the necessary next steps in his life. Parents are also brought into the OQD program at different times to witness the boys' reflections and to support their child's evolving identity as a young man.

The OQD Staff

To run the OQD program there is an experienced team made up of staff members in varying roles. There is a leadership team made up of two full time staff members at CCGS, experienced facilitators who run the sessions within the program, and a group of staff who range between 18 – 28 years of age which are called, 'mentors', who provide instrumental

and emotional support and assisting with progressively more complicated life situations (Agmon et al., 2015). While overcrowded curriculums and an excessive focus on testing have absorbed much of the precious time during which passionate teachers of the past stepped forward as mentors to students in adolescence (Dent, 2020), boys need mentors and role models who share knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster their personal and professional growth (Olivero, 2014). This is what the mentors in OQD are trained to do during the transition phase of the OQD program.

At the time of writing, OQD had been established within the school for several years, and over 1000 teenage boys had been through the program. The program is delivered through two primary successive phases, as described in the next sections.

Separation phase

The separation phase is arguably the most important part of the framework. As Dewey suggests, the separation is at the "centre of the redirection and reconstruction of action" (Dewey as quoted in Garrison, 1997, p. 95). Without it, transformational change is extremely hard to achieve. To create separation, the boys leave their family homes and live on campus for the duration (the transition phase) of their program (16 days). It is said that the ability to remain focused in the face of irrelevant distracting stimuli is crucial for successful change (Corbetta et al., 2008). To support this theory, the boys hand their phones in as soon as they arrive to campus, and they generally don't leave the program for co-curricular commitments out of school. For boys who have commitments outside of school in their community the OQD staff send a 'Pre-OQD Support Resource' to relevant community stakeholders to inform them of the program elements and aims. This helps to build understanding in the community so there isn't unnecessary pressure placed on the boys prior to the program commencing by, for example, community sporting teams to fulfill their commitment during their program. By achieving these key parts of separation from the beginning of the program it helps boys into the 'OQD container'. The OQD container is the unique

learning environment where the boys are purely focusing on the program and nothing else.

Prior to the participants entering the separation phase, the OQD staff run an information evening in November each year, for the parents of Year 8 boys who are coming into OQD the following year. This information evening provides an opportunity for staff to explain key elements of the program, hear from some OQD ‘graduates’ (students who completed OQD that year are interviewed by OQD mentors), and for parents to understand in depth what their role is when their son comes into OQD in the following year. The parents are also sent a ‘Pre-OQD Handbook’. It is also vital that the boys understand the program and have a chance to ask questions prior to entering so they come into the program with an open mindset. In the week leading up to each program beginning OQD staff meet with the incoming group for lunch to spend some time together, observe group dynamics, and answer any questions that the boys may have.

Boys are also presented with their OQD House tie on the first night of their program, which they wear during school time during their program. This helps teachers identify which students in their class are currently ‘in program’ and to keep an eye on them and offer some extra support if need be. The program maintains separation from the rest of the school community by the boys eating breakfast, recess, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner in a dining hall as a group. Given this, even though the boys still attend school during the program, separation from the normal school community is a focus to minimise distractions and maximise their time together as a community.

Given there are two full time staff members within the program, it is important for them to distinguish a change in their ‘titles’ when ‘out of program’ and when ‘in program’. For example, the Assistant Head of OQD goes by two names depending on what environment he is in. When this teacher is in English class and at school during a school day he is referred to as Mr. Nathan. However, when he is in OQD he is referred to as his nickname, ‘Hammer’. This is another example of maintaining separation, so the boys understand that when they are in OQD there is no

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school hierarchy and all the staff involved are just themselves when working with the boys on their OQD journey.

Wooden name tags are also worn by all the boys during the program and by the staff. On each person's name tag on one side of the name tag there is the person's first name, and on the other side of the name tag it is the person's nickname. The name tags assist the staff to get to know the boys quickly by name so they can build authentic relationships as quickly as possible. Staff are also instructed to dress 'casually' when 'on shift'. There is no 'staff uniform', as this distinguishes the staff from the boys. There is staff apparel that staff can wear if it is cold, or raining, but generally, the staff dress casually so they are not seen as 'better' than the boys.

A critical part of maintaining a tight 'container' is to not bring outside information into the container as it can disrupt the 'flow' of conversations already taking place in a program, and it can distract boys from what truly matters, their journey and growth in the program. For example, staff are instructed not to tell boys sport scores if there is a game on; instead, they are instructed to just explain to the boys that the sport scores aren't important right at this minute and to re-focus the boy's attention back to whatever activity they are doing in OQD.

The Transition Phase

The transition phase, simply put, is where the program is delivered, and the boy's journey truly begins. The key elements of the transition phase of the OQD program are listed below:

Developing and Living by Community Values. On the first night of the OQD program, the group are taken off campus to discuss, discover and vote on their community values to live by for the duration of the program and beyond. During this process, the group is split into small groups with a staff member facilitating the process for their small group, so every boy's voice is heard.

Axtel (2019) explains that:

When people feel their comments will be listened to and treated with respect, they are more likely to be vulnerable and say exactly what they are thinking. Conversations become broader and deeper when everyone is involved and feels safe enough to speak their minds (p. 17).

It is expected that each boy will contribute their opinion on what values mean the most to them and why. By the boys discussing and deciding on their own values this creates ownership and agency over their journey, and the standards they want to be held accountable to. The values are revisited daily in OQD by staff and boys to check in with how a group is going. The community values are used to acknowledge positive behaviour (when boys are seen living a specific value) and to discuss when they may have strayed away from a particular value.

Gratitude Journaling. Each evening, boys participating in OQD write in a specially designed journal about the gratitude moments within their day (the program calls these moments ‘awesome / magic moments’). Beech (2011) wrote that reflection is: A practice that incorporates emphasis on both outside-in and internalized dialogue...This entails self-questioning and self-change along with reacting to (or absorbing) external influences and perceptions...Reflection is regarded as part of the anthropological notion of liminality (p. 289). There is also a specific question on each day of the journal that the boys reflect on and answer, which relates to their gratitude for experiences they have had. Gratitude may be defined as “a sense of thankfulness and joy in response to receiving a gift, whether the gift be a tangible benefit from a specific other or a moment of peaceful bliss evoked by natural beauty” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 554). Several classroom studies of adolescents counting their blessings through journaling have shown a positive relationship between such gratitude and satisfaction with their school experiences over time, positive affect, and both global and domain-specific life satisfaction (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008; Froh et al., 2009).

Moments of silence for contemplation. The OQD program is fast paced, however, there are times during each day for boys to be in complete silence either when with the whole group or through some solo time. By

creating opportunities for silence and to spend time alone it helps a young person develop an internal dialogue for narrating and making sense of what is going on around them (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein, 2010). It affords them a place to contemplate and consider the great complexities of the world and how they fit within it (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein). In this state they can grow to be comfortable with themselves, which contributes to their self-awareness, identity formation and ease at being with others (Blumenkrantz & Goldstein).

Sharing of Stories. Niederhoffer and Pennebaker (2009) state that: “Sharing our story alerts our friends to our emotional and psychological state. In contrast, keeping a secret engenders a social chasm between the secret keepers and their friends. Keeping a secret is a cognitively consuming load that prevents the secret keeper from being a good listener and thereby exacerbates the social disconnection” (p.628). Translating upsetting experiences into words may also allow people to stop inhibiting their thoughts and feelings, to begin to organise their thoughts and perhaps find meaning in their traumas, and to reintegrate into their social networks (Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2009). The OQD program thus offers many opportunities for boys to share personal stories and experiences and hear from others about their life and their ‘story’. Sharing stories provides an ideal way of passing on wisdom and knowledge, whilst at the same time building a strong community (Rubinstein, 2005). When stories are shared within the program a ‘talking stick’ is used to ensure that members engage in proper turn-taking and respect for the storyteller (Lines & Gallasch, 2009). This is a powerful part of the program, building perspective, compassion, empathy and understanding amongst the group, which leads to the boys forming brother-like bonds.

The Now and Visioning Their Version 2.0. The OQD program also gives boys the opportunity to learn about themselves and their personality traits. Early in the program, they have the time and space to reflect on how they are going right now (where are they at), how did they get to that position, and what does their ‘version 2.0’ (the ‘new them’) look like. As the boys progress through the program, they begin to realise what behaviours they need to let go of, and what behaviours they need to

start exhibiting to step up within their community. For this to happen, the boys need to have a safe, non-judgemental environment created where they know they can speak openly and honestly. Visioning their future ‘best self’ and ‘best life’ is a powerful process for the boys. Questions staff ask the boys to consider during their visioning process include: What kind of choices do I want to make? How do I want to treat people? What do I want to be known for? How will I respond when I am challenged or have setbacks in my life?

Grow With, Not Apart. During early adolescence, the child's relationships that contribute to wellbeing are relationships with their peers, teachers, and in this case, their parents (Mertika., et al. 2020). Rutter et al. (1976), however, defines adolescence as when boys “become increasingly estranged from their families and that parents complain that they can no longer ‘get through’ to their children” (p.36). On separate weekends of the program, a significant male / father and significant female / mother come into the program to fully immerse themselves in their son's rite of passage. This provides boys with an opportunity to spend quality one on one time with their parents, have some fun and explore their relationship together. Boys also, during this weekend, respectfully share with their parent what they need ‘more of’ from them, what they need ‘less of’, and what is ‘working well’ with their relationship. It is known that “positive relationships are widely considered to be one of the pillars of well-being” (Mertika., et al. 2020, p.1). Through this process, the boys and their parents have an excellent opportunity to build a solid foundation for their relationship, growing together, not growing apart. Various other critical people from the boy's community are involved at crucial times during and after a boy's journey in OQD, as detailed in Appendix A.

Ritual Theatre. Throughout a rite of passage ritual theatre (RT) is used to create different environments for different conversations. When the boys enter on day one, they are met by the OQD security guards outside the accommodation to collect each boy's mobile phone. The security guards are staff (dressed up) to help make what can be an anxious moment for some boys (letting go of their phone) into a fun moment that

sets the tone for the program. More detail about RT can be found in Appendix A.

Challenge. For success in today's world adolescents need to prepare for lives and careers in which they will be constantly facing new learning challenges (Wilson & Conyers, 2020). Challenge is thus a vital piece of the OQD rite of passage. For boys to grow as young men, they need to step out of their comfort zone and look for ways to enter their growth zone. In traditional rites of passage participants are seen to endure physical pain to be seen as 'taking the next step' in their communities. Thus, challenge is an essential part of the OQD program. Determining how much to challenge a group or a specific individual can be a fine balance between challenging the group and individuals too much, thus the challenge having a counterproductive result, versus not challenging them enough so they fail to learn what they are like under pressure. In OQD, the boys endure physical challenges (boxing, yoga, running, push ups, paintball), social challenges (having a one-on-one meal each evening with a different boy) and emotional challenges which can involve a boy reflecting and sharing on relationships in his life, and/or the hardest challenges he has ever endured. Being away from their family and not having daily interaction with friends outside of their house group has also been challenging for boys in OQD.

Healthy competition (*The OQD Community Challenge Competition*). Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) documented that one powerful way to gain a solid identity is to engage in structured ordeals and challenges that test oneself and from which one can emerge with a greater sense of meaning and purpose. In the OQD approach, the boys are placed into two different rooms when they arrive to the program, Room one and Room two. These rooms are where they sleep, and it is also the 'team' they are in for the OQD community challenge competition. The competition involves structured challenges throughout the whole 16 days, testing the boys' physical, social, and emotional limits whilst in a safe and supportive environment. Throughout the program, there are many opportunities to earn points for their room. The competition provides an avenue to have fun, and for the boys to get to know everyone in their

room. Throughout this competition, the boys learn how to win with grace and lose with dignity.

Learning Essential Daily Life and 21st Century (Human) Life Skills.

Rites of passage are created to help guide participants through a certain stage of life and to teach them essential life skills they will need back in their community to be successful in life. The life skills that are taught to the boys in OQD include: washing and ironing; sewing; tying a tie; personal clothes organisation; and cooking. In addition to essential life skills, it is also the human skills of communication, empathy, teamwork, leadership, self-regulation/self-awareness, compassion, perspective, and humility that the program also gives the boys opportunities to develop.

Collective Effervescence. Collective effervescence is a sociological concept coined by Émile Durkheim (1912). According to Durkheim, a community or society may at times come together and simultaneously communicate the same thought and participate in the same action. Such an event then causes collective effervescence which excites individuals and serves to unify the group. During the OQD program, there are several moments of collective effervescence, which are designed to unify the group. These include, but are not limited to: singing songs on the bus; the OQD Silent applause; winning challenges together; and dancing during the boy / girl nights.

The Return and Re-Integration. This phase begins with a celebration ceremony where the boy's whole community come together once more to hear from each boy about what their commitment is for when they leave the program. This is a pivotal moment in the boy's journey as it gives them the space to be recognised by their family community that significant growth and development has occurred. The re-integration phase is then where the boys return home to their family community and the words (commitments) that have been shared and skills that were learned are turned into action and implemented into their daily routines.

The second aim of the present paper was to present a preliminary evaluation of the OQD approach. In the evaluation, the perspectives of 12 staff members involved in implementing the program on both their

experiences in delivering the program, and, on the impact of the approach on boys' development, were analysed. Data were collected primarily via regular journal entries and a survey. In addition to providing valuable data upon the key impacts of the program on boys' development, the evaluation was designed to identify ways in which the program could be enhanced by the school in future implementations.

Method

The present study took an interpretivist approach to studying the perceived effects of the OQD program on adolescent boys. This requires a method of investigation that allows the researcher to become an instrument in the interpretation of social phenomena. Therefore, the study will be conducted within the interpretivist theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, which places primary importance on the social meanings people attach to the world around them and how they respond to them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). One of the most basic ideas of interpretivism is that all human action is meaningful, and hence, "has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practice" (Usher 1996, p. 18). Interpretivists, therefore, focus upon examining the meanings that phenomena have for people in their everyday settings (O'Donoghue, 2007).

Blumer (1969) has argued that social research should be based on three principles. These are as follows: (i) human beings act towards things based on the meanings they have for them; (ii) the meanings of such things are derived from or arise out of the social interaction that one has with others; and (iii) meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things encountered. Adopting these principles as a foundation for the present study required that the perspectives of staff be explored, to provide a preliminary view upon the effectiveness and the challenges of implementing a rites of passage program within a mainstream education setting.

Participants

Participants were 12 staff members who were involved in implementing the OQD program at Christ Church Grammar School (Perth, Western Australia). There were 11 males and 1 female. Between all participants there is over 200 OQD programs of experience. Their ages ranged from 18 to 45 years. The 12 participants included both staff who had been involved in the implementation of the OQD in previous years, and those who were currently involved in its implementation. To ensure that maximum variation was achieved in the same, the participants held varied roles (mentors, facilitators, leaders) in implementing the program.

Ethics approvals

Approval to conduct the study was obtained by the author's institution. Each participant was provided with an information sheet describing the aims and processes to be used in the study and signed a consent form responding to the survey or submitting their journals for analysis. The information sheet included the aim of the study, a description of the data gathering methods; and an overview of the kinds of questions participants would be asked to comment upon in their journals. All participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage of the research without prejudice, and that their responses would remain confidential in the reporting of the results. In the presentation of results, therefore, each respondent was given a pseudonym to protect their identity and maintain the confidentiality of the responses.

Data collection and instruments

Data for the evaluation were collected using two primary instruments. The first was an open-ended survey, which staff had two weeks to complete. This posed a series of broad, open-ended questions as follows:

- What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of life skills?
- What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of relationships with peers?

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- What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of self-reflection and personal growth?
- What do you consider to be the key factors that can influence the positive impact of the program?
- What are the challenges that staff members may encounter in implementing the program? Did you encounter these yourself, and if so, what strategies did you use to overcome them?

The second data collection instrument was an ‘in-program’ journal, that the staff members wrote in for over 2 weeks (May 6 to May 21, 2023). In this, staff recorded what they saw in the boys each day; specifically in relation to them completing their life skills, interactions with their peers, moments of gratitude, living their community values, self-reflection/personal growth, and pushing themselves out of their comfort zone. They were also able to write about changes they saw in individuals, or changes they witnessed relating to the whole group.

Procedure

The study was conducted in line with one offering of the OQD program in 2023. Initially, the principal of the school was approached to provide formal consent for the evaluation to take place. After this was obtained, and consent forms returned, the researcher then emailed the link for the online survey to all participants. This survey was completed in a two-week period at the beginning of the school term. The journal was also completed online by the staff members over the period of one OQD program (May 6 to May 21).

After the data were collected, themes were generated by the author using an open coding approach (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Open coding is defined as “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). Open coding is the part of the analysis where the phenomena are named and categorised through a close examination of the data. During this stage of analysis, the raw data from the open-ended surveys

and documents are broken down into sentences, phrases, or words and each incident, idea, or event is given a name. Once phenomena have been identified in the data, concepts can then be grouped around them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of open coding stimulates the discovery not only of categories but also of their properties and dimension. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe the use of writing code notes and theoretical memos to capture an idea that has been sparked by an incident or phrase during the data collection phase. Memo writing connects the barebones analytic framework that coding provides with the polished ideas developed in the finished draft (Charmaz, 1994).

Results

The first question posed in the open-ended survey was, What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of life skills? During the open coding process, the specific codes generated included washing weekly, working together, becoming more respectful, taking great care in their appearance, personal reflections on the roles they could now play at home, and becoming less selfish. Four key themes were generated based on staff members' responses to this question. These related to (i) staff perceptions of boys' increased independence over the course of the program; (ii) evidence of boys' increased levels of personal responsibility; (iii) increased levels of initiative being taken (in particular, relating to boys deciding when to do washing, ironing, and personal organization); and (iv) an increased sense of pride is developed in the boys' appearance (e.g., one respondent commented upon boys' tendency to "take pride in their attire when meeting young ladies"). In another example, Jeremy mentioned that:

There is often a sense of pride when a boy sews on a button, or cooks their group a meal, as completing these domestic tasks is a big achievement for boys of this age. The pride often continues post OQD, as boys tell me about the washing they've been doing or meals they cooked for their family.

In response to the survey question, What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of relationships with peers? During the open coding process, codes were: relationships

were substantially improved; deeper conversations; more cohesive; tight bonds; helped boys to see each other; patience with each other; opportunity to see different side of their mates; showing their true selves; working collaboratively; trusting, authentic, healthy relationships; meaningful conversations; recognition of others; knowing each other on a deeper level, greater acceptance; encouraged to be vulnerable with each other; rely on other boys; and greater perspective and empathy, were generated. Four key themes within these were generated based on the thematic analyses performed: (i) breakdowns of social hierarchies; (ii) deeper / healthier relationships due to shared vulnerability; (iii) developing perspective and empathy; and (iv) enhanced sense of belonging because boys could just be their normal unique selves. Most participants made some mention of enhanced relationships with peers during the program. For example, Bruno commented that:

Through OQD, the boys are encouraged to recognize and praise the goodness in other boys. This is not often practiced at school, so it takes a bit of work through the program but by the end they are very good at showing their appreciation and love for others. I would say the key to the above statements is the development of empathy amongst young men.

Barry similarly mentioned that:

The programme helps boys to see each other's unique self and it brings them together as a tight, cohesive group.

At the return of the young men ceremony a boy said that the program helped other boys to understand who he was, and more importantly, him to understand who he was.

In response to the question, What, if any, changes did you typically see in boys throughout the program in the area of self-reflection and personal growth?, specific codes included willingness to let go, reduced self-consciousness, using detailed language, reflections on relationships, awareness of character strengths, increased emotional maturity and accountability, expressing pride, honouring others, generating personal values, increasing confidence and social awareness, gratitude; learning

about themselves, social clarity, sense of identity and responsibility. Four key themes within these were generated based on these analyses. These were that (i) challenges (physical, mental, social, and emotional) pushed the boys out of their comfort zone and into their growth zone; (ii) that dedicated journaling and silent time give the boys the opportunity to self-reflect on the young man they want to be, and who / what they are grateful for; (iii) that the boys become quicker to take ownership for their mistakes; and that (iv) the boys begin to acknowledge the unique characters strengths of one another. For example, with respect to the first key theme, Tim stated that:

Boys at the beginning of the program seem more resistant to get involved, and, more resistant to being a bit silly and having fun. Towards the end of the program, maybe due to better relationships or a lack of social media presence, the boys are clearly more willing to throw themselves into any activity, to have a bit more fun, and to be themselves more authentically. When boys are given opportunities to share towards the end of the program, they use detailed language. They are heard to use our language which adds more depth to their vocabulary and becoming more open to each other when sharing. It is a profound difference.

In response to the question, What do you consider to be the key factors that can influence the positive impact of the program?, specific codes generated included integration and involvement; wider school community; steps to support the boys; support and trust from school leadership unique experiences; try new things without fear; push boundaries; professional development; team buy-in; passionate team members; and having a diverse group of mentors. Four key themes within these were generated based on the analyses of these codes: (i) that mentor relationships with the boys are crucial to the overall success of a program; (ii) that the OQD team needs the support from the school leadership team; (iii) that a structured, step by step, reintegration process needs to be in place to support the boys; and that (iv) the OQD staff need to be fully committed to the program and the boys.

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For example, Riley stated that:

If everyone is onboard without any fear of embarrassment or hesitation to open up, the program has an incredibly positive effect on everyone.

Another participant, Mark, underscored the need for the boys to buy into the program, stating that:

Their perception of OQD as a valuable experience creates a positive cognitive association to what they learnt - such as their intention and young man behaviour. A boy who does not enjoy the program will not buy into the Rites of Passage structure.

Bruno, however, commented in caution that:

The program is very demanding, so to have staff who are passionate for the work and genuinely care about the wellbeing of young men is essential.

In a similar vein, Tyson highlighted both “the relationship of the OQD team with the boys” and the 'enrolment' or 'buy-in' of the boy’s family” as critical factors in the success of the program.

In response to the question, What are the challenges that staff members may encounter in implementing the program? Did you encounter these yourself, and if so, what strategies did you use to overcome them?, specific codes generated included flipping between roles of teacher and facilitator; lack of understanding; boys not following instructions; emotional toll; at times unsupported by school staff; requires authentic relationships; learning to prioritise; burnout, fatigue; need to be present in the container; balancing other work commitments; and need to establish boundaries with boys as key challenges. Three key themes were generated based on these analyses: (i) The program can cause emotional and mental fatigue, and strained relationships for staff with their family, friends, and partners; (ii) There is a need to find a balance between being a friend to the boys and being a mentor; and (iii) When staff are distracted and aren’t fully present, it impacts the effectiveness of the program. For example, Sally commented that:

Given the tight unit of the staff culture, when one staff member is a little 'off' it can impact the entire team negatively.

Strategies for dealing with the challenges noted included: regular team check-ins to express any concerns and any support team members needed was very beneficial; having open communication amongst the team and to management (the leaders); staff being organised with their own time management; working together to address workload constraints; establishing rules, values, and authentic relationships to create a safe and supportive environment for the boys to feel comfortable in the container; and setting clear boundaries with the boys, establishing the boy/mentor relationship. For example, Donald stated that:

I found myself mentally and emotionally exhausted in the first year or two. I deep dived and was completely engrossed in each boy's journey. Mentors need to find a balance of switching hats – being present in the container, but also making sure to be present with friends, family, and partners outside of OQD.

Leon went on to suggest that scheduling could be an important part of this solution:

Complacency could creep in if you are rostered on the same nights/sessions every program. We are at our best if we choose different days to be part of each program, as new sets of eyes on that workshop result in us finding 1%ers to enhance our program. Also, young mentors playing different roles builds capacity within the team, and helps them grow as people and professionals, keeping the program sustainable for more experienced mentors.

Some challenges were also noted in the thematic analysis of the journal entries gathered over the course of the program. For example, in two entries from Days 11 to 14 of the program, staff members noted that:

I found it difficult to reign the boys in. A couple of the boys were refusing to listen to one of the mentors as we were trying to get them settled for journaling. They appear to be getting tired, challenged and some frustration is starting to appear.

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Fatigue showing strong... I can see the boys moving through the emotions, reflecting, challenging, very tired, unknowns etc.

These entries were, however, countered by the large number of positive reflections that appeared. These highlighted, for example, the increased pride and respect that the boys came to show over the course of the program:

I saw boys working together to cook a meal for their dinner, plus, have a meal judged by the guest judges. It was fantastic to see how much pride the groups had in their dish. And it was special to see one of the boys lead his group with his own recipe that he cooks at home. A nice magic moment for him.

One of the boys reflected on his behaviour on the first night in the program and stood up in front of everyone stating he needed to be more respectful and considerate of others on OQD. A good moment for this young man, now it is time for him to back up his words with actions. A boy came straight up to me at afternoon tea. We had a lovely / genuine chat about how he is going, and he made the effort to see how my day was, and how I'm travelling.

Several journal entries commented specifically upon the impact of the program on the boys' relationships with their families:

I was very impressed with the way the boys respected their mothers tonight. They were all very caring and showed their soft side. During the story sharing circle, they listened intently and benefited greatly from gaining perspective from women in their community.

On the mother/son walk one of the boys said to another mother that his role models are his parents. He said before OQD he would have said a sports star, but the program has given him time to reflect properly on what's important to him.

Other comments related to the impact of the program on relationships with peers:

I played soccer with a few of the young men this afternoon and I was able to reflect on the subconscious effect we have on them. They were

living the young man behaviours, helping each other when they went down and resolving rule breaches with integrity, maturity and without putting others down.

I noticed one of the boys go up to another boy during journaling who appeared to be upset and emotional to make sure he was ok.

Thus, while the journal entries did highlight challenges with respect to implementing the program, these were generally offset with observations about the positive impact it was having on students' character and relationships with others.

General Discussion

The holistic OQD approach to wellbeing and development taken by Christ Church Grammar School represents a novel take on the traditional Rites of Passage framework. This approach aims to draw upon a boy's entire community to help him reflect and learn the skills he needs to take his next steps in life. Results of this preliminary evaluation suggest that the OQD program can positively impact a boys' mental health and wellbeing on their journey through adolescence. By challenging boys physically, socially, and emotionally, boys in the OQD program were seen to move towards growth in key areas of their lives, including relationships with their parents and peers, personal growth as individuals, and daily life skills (e.g., washing, ironing, personal organization). Boys were also seen to develop more empathy, compassion and understanding amongst each other throughout the program.

The positive results do appear to come at a cost though, with many of the staff involved in implementing the program commenting that they feel overworked, fatigued, and emotionally drained during and at the end of the program. Team check-ins that are used to create a space for staff to voice how they are going leading into a program, what they have coming up for them during that program and what support (if any) they need from the team were seen as a positive strategy to give staff a voice to be heard. Further comments suggested that the staff involved in the program need to be committed, passionate and genuinely care about the wellbeing of the young men for their impact to be positive and lasting.

Another important theme that presented from the open-ended survey instrument was that of staff (especially the OQD mentors) finding it challenging to find the balance between treating the boys as friends and then having complications with the boys listening to their instructions at times. Results suggested that mentors can be too friendly with boys early in the program which in turn causes the boys to become too comfortable with them and can overstep the line of the relationship in the way they interact with the mentors. What appeared to be a useful strategy to counteract this was establishing clear boundaries, values, and expectations early in the program. A secondary factor relating to this is the boys do not choose when to complete the OQD program. It is chosen for them, to fit in with the school yearly calendar. Dent (2020) writes that “each boy has his own blueprint for when he will begin and complete adolescence and the unique challenges he will meet during his time on the bridge” (p. 19). With boys not choosing when they do OQD, issues can arrive as a boy may not be ‘ready’ to engage fully with the program developmentally.

It should be noted here that the results reported in this paper are limited to the perspectives of the staff. Therefore, questions remain on what the OQD journey is like from the boy’s perspective, and a boy’s parents. The results also do not indicate boys’ reintegration phases proceeded, or whether the boys carried their learnings from the program back into their family / community routines. It would be beneficial for future research to focus a study on the boy’s journey in OQD, and to study the parents’ perspectives on the program. Teachers at the school could also be consulted to better gauge the effects of the program on boys’ day-to-day school behaviour, as well as their academic performance.

While the results of this study demonstrate the positive impacts that the existing program has, it is possible that such programs can also be integrated more fully into the day-to-day activities of schools. In OQD, through rigorous ways of maintaining separation from the wider school community and sustaining a tight container from the start to the finish of the program, the rite of passage is designed to work side by side with the academic timetable. It is proposed here, however, that future programs at other schools could be enhanced further by embedding a more rigorous

and segmented framework which supports each critical element of a rite of passage in a school context. Such a framework is likely to produce more durable changes, and be easier to follow for staff, than the existing framework. The proposed six-phase framework, elaborated in Appendix B, would include the following separate phases: (i) Phase 1 – Enrolment; (ii) Phase 2 – Separation; (iii) Phase 3 – Transition; (iv) Phase 4 – Celebration; (v) Phase 5 – Re-integration; and (vi) Phase 6 – Review and reevaluate. This includes a review and re-evaluation some weeks after the boys re-integrate back into their schools and their family community. This would be a critical step involving three check-in points:

1. The participants would be brought back together as a group approximately 8-10 weeks after their rite of passage has been completed. The purpose of this would be to determine how they have been going with their re-integration, where they need to step up more, and what supports they need to continue this integration process.
2. Parents would be invited back together to have an evening of checking in on ‘wins’ they have been having with their son, ‘challenges’ they have been having and what ‘support’ they could offer for him to continue stepping into young adulthood.
3. A program would be introduced 6-12 months following the completion of the rite of passage, to revisit some of the key themes covered during the rite of passage, but also, to explore new themes when participants are at a different stage in their development.

Furthermore, referencing specifically the 20 elements from Blumenkrantz and Goldstein (2010) that make up a successful rites of passage program, the OQD program appears to have some room for growth in three elements. In particular, Element 13 (Connection to ancestral roots) is intended to provide participants with the opportunity to learn, value and appreciate one’s connection to those who lived before them, and the values and ethics their heritage embeds. Perhaps as part of the parent weekends, the mothers and fathers could be asked a specific question to share their answer with their son relating to their heritage and ‘ancestral roots’ (if they weren’t aware of it already). Once boys

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understand their past, they could then share this amongst the group to add to the depth of understanding, perspective and closeness that is derived each program. More research into this area is recommended.

Another element that could be considered for further development in the OQD program is Element 4 (You can only bring someone as far as you have been yourself). Over 70% of the OQD staff are 25 years old or younger, and over 60% of staff are 21 years old or younger. Although it appears all the staff are trained in understanding and implementing the rites of passage framework to a high level, there are gaps in natural years lived and general life experience amongst the staff. This could be part of the reason for the staff feeling overwhelmed and emotionally drained throughout a program. It appears that for the program to be successful over an extended period, it requires several 'older' staff who have had a vast amount of life experiences to be involved in the program, to not only lead and guide the boys along the OQD journey, but also, to support the younger staff adequately in OQD.

A final element that could be enhanced within the OQD program relates to Element 17 (Obligation to service to the larger community). This element is not currently emphasised within the OQD program and does not feature significantly in its implementation based on the rite of passage framework. By including this element in future programs and providing the boys an opportunity to 'give back' to their community through some service, this may strengthen the overall experience that the boys take away from the OQD program.

Overall, the results of this study illustrate the significant potential of the OQD framework for executing a rite of passage program within mainstream education settings. There are, however, potential enhancements that could be incorporated to further refine the program. Future research and review may benefit from the perspectives of the boys themselves and of others in their lives (including females) and further development can be conducted to evaluate elements of the program in more detail. Notwithstanding the developments mentioned in this paper that could further enhance the effects of the OQD program, this program

clearly holds significant promise for fostering the positive and safe crossing of the bridge of adolescence for boys.

Brief Author Biography

Jarrold Kayler-Thomson has over 15 years' experience in education and is passionate about empowering young people to develop the best versions of themselves through growing their social and emotional skills, as well as their physical and mental health. He holds a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Social Science from Edith Cowan University (Perth, Western Australia), and a Master of Education (specialising in Mental Health and Wellbeing) from the University of Western Australia (Perth).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Further Details on the OQD Program

Program components	Explanation
Recognising the unique awesomeness in each young man	Throughout the program (at the appropriate time) the boys hear from a significant male (usually their father), a significant female (usually their mother), their peers, and staff about what is awesome about them. What the unique gifts, strengths, talents that they possess are. These are uplifting moments within the program.
Young woman from the community	The OQD program involves a boy's whole community. Young women from his community are involved in two 'Boy/Girl nights' which focus on the boys and girls exploring teamwork / working together and building perspective and understanding through various activities. One activity gives the young women an opportunity to share stories about what a good man is to them, who is a man in their life that they look up to and what it is like to be a teenage girl today. While the girls are sharing these reflections the boys have formed an outer circle, where they are in complete silence, sitting and listening to every word spoken. After the girls have finished, it is the boys turn to form an inner circle and share on what they think a good man is, who is a woman in their life they admire and what it is like to be a teenage boy these days. These nights in OQD are crucial for growing the boys understanding and perspective.
Teachers, Tutors and Heads of House	Within the pastoral care system at CCGS the boys are all appointed a 'tutor', who is a full-time teacher responsible for 15-20 students within that house, with the students ranging from Years 7 – 12. The boys' tutors enter the OQD program for a lunch where the boys get to have a different conversation with their tutor as to what they might have in tutorial of a morning before school begins. The boys are encouraged to share what they are getting out of the

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	<p>program, their highlights and what they have found to be the most challenging parts of the program. Each boy also has a Head of House (which oversees and manages all the tutors) and the Head of House is also invited into the program as well. Both tutor and Heads of House are provided with a ‘Pre-OQD Support Resource for Tutors’ and a ‘Post OQD Tutor Check-in Resource’ which assists tutors and Heads of House to check in with their boy’s post OQD to see how they can support them during the re-integration phase.</p> <p>With tutors using this resource it gives them the best opportunity to understand what the OQD rite of passage was like for the tutees, and how to best support their boys moving forward.</p>
<p>Learning essential daily life skills</p>	<p>Boys are notably proud of themselves when they complete the ‘life skills session’ which then sets them up to begin developing independence. By practising these skills during the program, it gives the boys the best possible chance to continue to do these skills when they return home, showing their family community they are ready to ‘step up’ as a young man and fulfill a different role within their family dynamic.</p>
<p>Ritual theatre</p>	<p>When the boys enter on day one, they are met by the OQD security guards outside the accommodation to collect each boy’s mobile phone. The security guards are staff dressed up to help make what can be an anxious moment for some boys (letting go of their phone) into a fun moment that sets the tone for the program. Staff regularly reflect on parts of the program that can be enhanced with some ‘RT’.</p> <p>Having said that, it is important to note that going ‘over the top’ with RT can distract the boys from what they should be focusing on.</p> <p>Some other examples (but certainly not limited to) of RT within the program are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff dressing up as ‘guest judges’ for the MasterChef Cooking Challenges • Using a talking stick for specific story sharing circles

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using candles for specific sessions to create a safe and non-evasive ambience• Using tingshas (small cymbals) to gain silence amongst the group (instead of shouting / yelling)• Using the OQD ‘silent applause’, which is staff (and boys) moving their fingers, creating the ‘spirit fingers’ which is used when a boy is sharing, for when we don’t want that space broken. So, the silent applause is used by boys (and staff) if they wish to silently acknowledge what the person speaking is sharing.
The Return (A celebration of the young man’s journey)	<p>This is also a time where each young man is introduced to the community by one of the OQD mentors. Each mentor will recognise the unique strengths, gifts, and talents of each individual before handing over the microphone to the young man to hear what he is willing to commit to when he returns to his family community that afternoon. At the end of the ceremony the boy’s journey in the program is showcased by a movie involving all their achievements, activities completed, and memories created throughout the program. This again gives parents, siblings, grandparents, tutors, and Heads of House a great insight into the depth of growth the boys have endured / achieved throughout their program.</p>
Bringing it home ‘Action booklet’	<p>For this to happen the young men receive a ‘Bringing it home action booklet’ which has ten activities that are specifically designed to assist with the re-integration phase. The concept behind the action booklet is that the young men complete week one’s activity during the first week after leaving the program, and week two’s activity in the second week and so on. Within the action booklet is a journaling page where the boys have space to continue their gratitude reflections each day, reflecting on a specific question each evening and writing their response accordingly. This form of positive journaling has</p>

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	<p>also been associated with heightened levels of individuals' well-being especially in the area of positive affect and improved interpersonal relationships (<u>Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Watkins et al., 2003</u>). By having a daily journaling section in the action booklet this also helps with keeping the booklet on their bedside table, out in the open, so they have more chance to keep the re-integration phase in the forefront of their mind.</p>
<p>Bringing it home 'Support booklet'</p>	<p>The support booklet is for parents and guardians to help them support their son as they return home and commence the re-integration phase of their rite of passage. The support booklet mirrors the boys action booklet; however, it is written from the parent perspective.</p>
<p>OQD staff staying involved in the school community</p>	<p>The OQD staff maintain their connections with the 'OQD graduates' during the re-integration phase by taking on significant roles in the school community which have involved fulfilling sport coaching roles and helping run co-curricular activities such as debating and public speaking. These connections are invaluable. With OQD staff being able to check in with OQD graduates one on one whether it be at a training session or around the school in some capacity, it strengthens the chances of the boys sustaining their transformational growth as their accountability to the commitments they shared during the program are followed up on.</p>
<p>Young Men's Post OQD Check-In</p>	<p>Approximately eight to ten weeks after a OQD program finishes, the young men are invited back into OQD for a whole morning, being released from their academic timetable for four periods (8:55am to 12:45pm). The purpose of the check-in is to bring the group back together to have some fun and, review and reflect on their journey within the OQD program once more. The boys fill in the Post OQD Check in booklet and then check in as a group, one by one, on how they have been going with their action booklet and turning their words / commitments that they shared during OQD into</p>

	actionable behaviours within the re-integration phase.
Parent/Guardian's Post OQD Check-In	Approximately eight to ten weeks after a OQD program finishes, the parents are invited back into OQD for an evening to connect with other parents, and to check in on how their son is going, and how they are going from a parent's perspective. Parents get to hear from other parents about the 'wins' they are having with their son, and the challenges they are having. Parents have an opportunity to share parenting strategies and the OQD staff consistently reference the support booklet throughout this parent check in.
The Young Man Project (YMP) in Year 10 (Health & Wellbeing)	In OQD the boys spend time deconstructing the ins and outs of what it means to be a man. The YMP was introduced / developed in 2020 to continue that journey and act as a sixth phase in the OQD rite of passage which I call the 'revisit / re-evaluate' phase. The YMP is a five-week program which every student completes at some stage in year 10 as part of the school's health and wellbeing program. The YMP involves fifteen sessions (15 x 50-minute periods during the school academic timetable) following on from OQD with a focus on revisiting OQD commitments, creating new relationships with the people in their class and building on the social and emotional skills that are critical for young men of the future. The program follows a booklet specially designed for the Year 10 cohort, following on from OQD. This program is delivered by the Head of OQD and the Assistant Head of OQD, to maintain consistency and to further assist the boys on their journey through young manhood.

Appendix B: Proposed Six-Phase Rites of Passage Framework

Phase	Description
Phase 1 - Enrolment	Prior to the participants entering a rites of passage program to commence the separation phase it is crucial that their parents understand what the program is, why it's important and what their role will be. Parents handing over their son during their teenage years can be met with trepidation (or excitement) so program leaders must spend time 'enrolling' parents, so they are supportive of the program. It is also crucial that staff who are not directly involved in the rite of passage are still enrolled and understand what their role is, on how to best support the boys on their journey.
Phase 2 – Separation	This is where the participant is separated from their normal way of being. They will leave their family, routine, and friends behind in order to create separation, which leads to them having genuine time and space to reflect and grow into their new status.
Phase 3 - Transition	This is where the program content is delivered, and the participant endures the challenges and periods of reflection to forge their new self. Their version 2.0.
Phase 4 - Celebration	At the end of the rite of passage it is crucial that the participants are celebrated. Celebrated for their shift, but also celebrated for completing their rite of passage. At this stage it is vital that the participants have an opportunity to do a speech on what they have learned about themselves and what they are committing to when they return home to their family community, their normal routine / way of being.
Phase 5 – Re-integration	The re-integration phase is where the participant returns home to their family community and the words (commitments) that have been shared and skills that were learned are turned into action and implemented into their daily routine.

<p>Phase 6 – Review and revaluate</p>	<p>This is a critical step that involves three check-in points.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The participants must be brought back together as a group approximately 8-10 weeks after their rite of passage has been completed. This is to see how they have been going with their re-integration, where they need to step up more and what support do they need to continue this integration process.2. Parents need to be invited back together to have an evening of checking in on ‘wins’ they have been having with their son, ‘challenges’ they have been having and what ‘support’ they could offer their son in order to assist them to continue stepping into young adulthood.3. Introduce a program 6-12 months on (following the completion of the rite of passage) to revisit some of the key themes covered during the rite of passage, but to also explore new themes when participants are at a different stage in their development.
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