



the MAT program  
a therapeutic martial arts program

# LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM

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[www.thematprogram.com](http://www.thematprogram.com)

0424178216  
Rodrigo Castellanos,  
MAT Program Manager

@thematprogram

rodrigo@thematprogram.com

*"The MAT Life Skills Program is aligned to the Victorian Personal and Social Capability Curriculum strands of Self-Awareness and Management, and Social Awareness and Management."*

BE STRONG • BE CALM • BE KIND • TRY HARD

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The MAT Life Skills Program is an *active therapeutic modality* that combines the principles of *physical and mental wellbeing* with those of traditional martial art training techniques. Its format engages and empowers young people to learn life skills, and to better manage the challenges in their lives.

The MAT Life Skills Program has been successfully implemented across Victorian schools and community agencies in the following modalities:

- Targeted Interventions for young people who are at risk of disengagement from school due a variety of risk factors, including: mental health issues, family crises, drug or alcohol use, low educational achievement, criminal behaviour. Targeted Interventions can be delivered on a One on One basis, or in groups of up to 12 students in order to better focus on common challenges and key strategies for that individual or cohort of young people.
- Positive Behaviour Support Programs for larger groups of young people or entire school year levels in consultation with the school or agency as a way to reinforce a set of positively stated behavioural expectations.

The MAT Life Skills Program uses martial arts drills, games, metaphors and stories, to deliver the physical and mental wellbeing objectives of your school or agency in a **fun and interactive way**. The program does NOT rely on sparring of any form amongst its participant.

The MAT Life Skills Program uses an **evidence-based approach** including pre and post group surveys, school interviews, key success measures and risk management strategies throughout the planning, delivery and reporting phases of the program.



The MAT Program is proudly run by the non-for-profit organisation TESSA Inc



Each session is prepared with a **Lesson Plan and Lesson Review** which will be used for Reporting purposes. A brief example of exercises included in the sessions can be found below:

MAT EXERCISE	EXECUTION	LINK TO CURRICULUM STRAND (Example)
Samurai Patrol	Group exercise that allows students to also perform individually and respond to basic commands.	<i>Social Awareness:</i> Understand relationships. Importance of listening skills. Experience the difference between teamwork and "pack mentality".
Noodle Dodge	Instructors use foam noodles that the students then avoid with particular movements.	<i>Social Management:</i> Make Decisions under pressure. Understanding anxiety, how it works on our bodies and what can we do to manage it.
Breathing Exercises	Chest breathing, chest-belly breathing, belly breathing and importance of the diaphragm.	<i>Self-Awareness:</i> Recognize emotions. Understand breathing techniques as method to reduce stress responses, anxiety and to aid self-regulation.
The Rock	Exercise where children are encouraged to look to the front while instructors, without physical contact, try to make them laugh.	<i>Self-Management:</i> Express emotions appropriately. Understand the difference between events, emotions and behaviours. Opportunity to learn how events influence our emotions and what we can do about it.
Teicho and Board Breaking	Palm strike with open fingers. Different versions with emphasis on cooperation rather than force. Traditional martial arts boards used are age appropriate.	<i>Self-Awareness:</i> Recognize personal qualities and achievements. Celebrate a journey and appreciate what can be achieved when we work hard for it.

The MAT Life Skills Program supports a Positive Climate for **Learning amongst Victorian schools and agencies as well as empowering over 15,000 young people by:**

- Helping them to be able to recognise their emotions
- Providing them with strategies to express their emotions appropriately
- Supporting them in becoming confident, resilient and adaptable
- Developing pathways for effective communication
- Showing positive ways in which to negotiate and resolve conflict

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