

## Beyond Bullying (2012-2017)

### Aim

Beyond Bullying tested the pragmatic efficacy of a whole-school bullying prevention program (Friendly Schools) plus an innovative Motivational Interviewing (MI) counselling intervention to reduce the mental health problems experienced high school students who bully others. This project aimed to provide policy makers and school staff with a framework to reduce bullying among young people.

The project involved counselling young people who were identified as bullying others with MI. In addition, the 'Friendly Schools Plus' program was used to provide schools with resources and strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviours and attitudes among all students.

### Methods

Beyond Bullying was an age-cohort study within a randomised control trial. Student survey data was collected from grade 8 and 9 students from 12 WA secondary schools.

Schools were randomly assigned to two conditions. Grade 8 and 9 students received the intervention in 2015/2016 and were compared with students from the same grade and school prior to the intervention implementation.

### Results/Findings

Results showed a significant decrease in reported bullying perpetration in subsequent cohorts of both grade 8 and 9 students, and a significant reduction in bullying victimisation and cybervictimisation for grade 8 students, when the FS student curriculum was taught compared to the usual curriculum.

This study is one of few bullying prevention interventions with demonstrated effectiveness in real-world conditions, operating with standardised support from an education publisher and almost no support from the research team.

### Who was involved?

Investigators: Caitlin Gray, Donna Cross, Kevin Runions, Rena Vithiatharan, Therese Shaw, Tommy Cordin

External collaborators: Phillip Slee (Flinders University), Marilyn Campbell (Queensland University of Technology), Ken Resnicow (University of Michigan), Christina Salmivalli (University of Turku), Department of Education WA, Association of Independent Schools Western Australia (AISWA)

Project partners: APS College of Counselling Psychologists, APS College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists (CEDP), Association of Independent Schools WA (AISWA), Catholic Education WA, Department of Education WA, Department of Health WA, Headspace, Independent School Nurses Association of Western Australia, Middle Years of Schooling Association (MYSA),

Mindmatters, School Chaplaincy Program (WA), The Independent School Counsellors' Association of WA (ISCA WA), The School Psychologists' Association of Western Australia Inc (SPAWA), The Western Australian Association of Teacher Assistants Inc (WAATA), Youth Focus

## Publications

Cross, D., Runions, K.C, Resnicow, K., Britt, E., Gray, C. 2018. Motivational Interviewing as a positive response to high school bullying. *Psychology in Schools*, 55(5): 464-475

Runions, K.C., Salmivalli C, Shaw T, Burns S, Cross, D. 2018. Beyond the reactive-proactive dichotomy: Rage, wrath, reward and recreational aggression predict bully and bully/victim status. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 44(5): 501-511.

Pennell, D., Campbell, M. A., Tangen, D., Runions, D., Brooks, J., & Cross, D. 2018. Facilitators and barriers to the implementation of Motivational Interviewing (MI) for bullying perpetration in school settings. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 61(1): 143-150.

Cross, D., Runions, K.C., Shaw, T., Wong, J.W.Y., Campbell, M., Slee, P., Salmivalli, C., Pearce, N., Barnes, A., Burns, S., Lester L., Resnicow, K. 2019. Friendly Schools Universal Bullying Prevention Intervention: Effectiveness with Secondary School Students. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, 1:45-57.

Shaw, T., Runions, K.C., Johnston, R.S., Cross, D. 2018. Does the risk outweigh the benefits? Adolescent responses to completing health surveys. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 28(2), 412-426.