

Supportive Schools (2005-2007)

Aim

Supportive Schools aimed to develop and test the Friendly Schools intervention in order to reduce bullying and aggression among students who had recently transitioned to secondary school.

Methods

Supportive Schools was a three-year cluster randomised control trial. The study cohort comprised 3,462 Grade 8 students (mean age 13 years) recruited from 21 Catholic education secondary schools in Perth, Western Australia. Intervention schools were provided with individualised training and resources to support students' transition and reduce bullying using a multi-level comprehensive intervention addressing classroom curriculum, school policies and procedures, the social and physical environment, pastoral care approaches and school-home-community links.

Results/Findings

Supportive Schools was one of the first studies to demonstrate improved bullying outcomes for adolescents following their transition from primary to secondary schools.

The intervention had a consistently significant positive effect across a range of outcomes, including bullying perpetration, victimisation, depression, anxiety, stress, feelings of loneliness and perceptions of school safety at the end of the students' first year in secondary school. However, none of these differences were sustained into the students' second year of secondary school.

These findings demonstrate the immediate value of whole-school interventions to reduce bullying behaviour and associated harms among students who have recently transitioned to secondary school, as well as the need to provide strategies that continue to support students as they progress through school, to sustain these effects.

Who was involved?

Investigators: Donna Cross, Thérèse Shaw, Melanie Epstein, Natasha Pearce, Amy Barnes, Sharyn Burns, Stacey Waters, Leanne Lester, Kevin Runions.

Publications

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