

Solid Kids Solid Schools (2006-2009)

Aim

Solid Kids, Solid Schools aimed to understand bullying and aggression in the Aboriginal context and to help schools to implement guidelines and practices to prevent, reduce and manage bullying in the school.

Methods

This three year study involving over 260 Aboriginal children, youth, elders, teachers and Aboriginal Indigenous Education Officers (AIEO's), and an Aboriginal led and developed Steering Committee.

The project worked with Yamaji region elders, young people and community members to co-develop and pilot test resources to reduce harms from school bullying in Aboriginal communities.

Semi-structured interviews with were conducted with 260 participants from 3 regional towns in WA. 119 primary, 21 high school students, 40 parents/carers, 18 elders and 60 AIEOs participated.

Results/Findings

It is the first study that contextualises Aboriginal bullying, using a socio-ecological model where the individual, family, community and society are all interrelated and influence the characteristics and outcomes of bullying. The study revealed that intra-racial bullying is pervasive in the Midwest of Western Australia. The study found that bullying occurs frequently and is perpetuated by family and community violence, parental responses to bullying and institutional racism.

One of the project outcomes was the development of the 'We All Solid' anti-bullying program. The series of films contained within the program are aimed at providing discussion points educators may utilise to engage students in further learning related to the content of each scenario. The responses provide an ideal teaching tool to highlight positive strategies students may employ to respond to bullying behaviours.

The accompanying Learning Materials are designed to enable students to understand and identify bullying behaviours explicitly in a social/emotional and physical context. Participation and engagement in the program is aimed at building educative understandings about what bullying is to empower and equip students to develop their own methods and resources for overcoming these issues.

The program integrates a range of learning areas across the curriculum including: Health, English, The Arts, Society and Environment and Technology and Enterprise. A range of learning activities have been designed and included to appeal to varied learning styles and can be utilised in schools.

Who was involved?

Investigators: Juli Coffin, Ann Larson, Donna Cross

The Solid Kids, Solid Schools project was led by the Child Health Promotion Research Centre (CHPRC) in partnership with the Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health (CUCRH) and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (TICHR). It is now solely located within the Telethon KIDS organisation and is run by Dr. Juli Coffin and research assistant Heather Jacobs from Geraldton.

Publications

Coffin, J., Larson, A., Cross, D. 2010. Bullying in an Aboriginal context. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 39(1):77-87.