

Cyber Friendly Schools (2008-2012)

Aim

Cyber Friendly Schools (CFS) aimed to enhance the capacity of school staff, students, and families to respond effectively to reduce cyberbullying through a whole-school program.

The CFS project involved the development of evidence-based practices and measured the longitudinal impact of a whole-school online cyberbullying prevention and intervention program.

Methods

This longitudinal group randomized control trial involved more than 3000 students from 35 non-government high schools in WA. Schools were randomised to an intervention (n=19) or usual practice comparison group (n=16). The intervention group received the CFSP program in Grades 8 and 9.

Three major components were designed to target (1) the whole-school community including staff, (2) students and (3) parents, each including teaching and learning resources and a web-based resource for students, families and teachers (Cross, Shaw, et al., 2016).

In addition, groups of students were recruited, trained and supported to act as 'cyber leaders' for their school, working with school staff to implement the CFSP intervention, engage with students and parents, and support peers with any online difficulties (Cross, Lester, Barnes, Cardoso, & Hadwen, 2015).

Online questionnaires were administered to students over three years to measure their cyberbullying experiences.

Results/Findings

This project was the world's first randomised control trial to demonstrate a reduction in the prevalence of cyberbullying following a school-based intervention.

The program was associated with significantly greater declines in the odds of involvement in cyber-victimization and perpetration from the pre- to first post-test, even though teachers implemented only about one third of the program on average, citing time constraints and a lack of confidence to teach cyber-related content (Cross, Shaw, et al., 2016). The CFSP therefore demonstrated the potential for whole-school cyberbullying interventions to reduce the likelihood of this behaviour, and further highlighted the need to build teacher capacity and self-efficacy to address cyberbullying effectively.

Who was involved?

Investigators: Donna Cross, Therese Shaw, Kate Hadwen, Patricia Cardoso, Phillip Slee, Clare Roberts, Laura Thomas, and Amy Barnes

Publications

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