INCLUSIVE: Reducing school aggression through a whole-school restorative justice intervention.

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Overview

- Context
- Background to intervention
- Components of intervention
- Research
Context

10 to 15 year olds:
- 9 out of 10 have experienced bullying
- Over 1 in 5 bullied in a way that frightened or upset them in last year
  (British Crime Survey, 09/10)

16 to 25 year olds:
- Over 1 in 3 experienced physical attack
- Half of whom sustained injury
  (Beatbullying, 2011)
Context

Outcomes of bullying
- Injury
- Psychological adjustment
- Risk behaviours
- Self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicide
Context
Background: School-based interventions

Reviews suggest the following components of successful interventions:

- Multiple components
- ‘Whole school’ approach focused on school environment
- Promotion of social and emotional skills
- Involve peer-mediation
- Focus on a range of types of violence/aggression (not just bullying)
- Delivered from within schools (not researcher delivered)
Background: School-based interventions

Why whole school approaches?

- Bullying: systemic/group process
- Bystanders are affected in similar ways to victims:
  - Negative perception of school and social climate
- Avoids stigmatization of perpetrators/victims being singled out
- More effective
Background: School-based interventions

Restorative Justice:

● Bringing victims and aggressor together
● Restoring damaged relationships (rather than apportioning blame/punishment)
● Allows students a say in determining school policies towards bullying/aggression
● Increased social coherence helps prevent conflict
● Not particularly effective unless... implemented with a whole school approach
General aim

To examine the feasibility of a whole-school intervention based on restorative justice approaches to discipline which aims to reduce aggression and bullying in schools.
**Logic Model**

**Intervention logic model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusive intervention inputs</th>
<th>Intervention processes and actions</th>
<th>Changes to school practices (‘boundaries’ and ‘framing’)</th>
<th>Changes to school ethos (instructional and regulatory orders)</th>
<th>Student intermediate impacts</th>
<th>Student health outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding of £4000 for admin costs, staff cover and specific actions</td>
<td>Action group decides priorities, oversees actions</td>
<td>Improved communication and relationships between: -students -staff and students</td>
<td>‘Instructional order’* more engaging and combines academic and emotional learning</td>
<td>More students engaged in learning with high aspirations</td>
<td>Reductions in aggression and bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey needs of year-8 students and audit existing policies and practices to identify priorities</td>
<td>Revised school policies and rules</td>
<td>PSHE curricula reviewed and new social/emotional curriculum delivered</td>
<td>‘Regulatory order’** more responsive, inclusive and cooperative</td>
<td>More students connected to school community and avoid anti-school groups and risk behaviours</td>
<td>Improved quality of life and emotional &amp; mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of x6 action group meetings comprising staff and students</td>
<td>Peer mediation reviewed and revised</td>
<td>Staff trained in restorative practice</td>
<td>Conflict viewed as opportunity for learning</td>
<td>Relations nurtured</td>
<td>Reduced substance use and sexual risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in restorative practice (intro, intermediate and in-depth)</td>
<td>Circle time</td>
<td>Conferencing</td>
<td>All staff and students responsible for safer, more supportive, respectful and engaging school ethos</td>
<td>More students are able to form trusting, empathetic and warm relationships</td>
<td>Reduced truancy and school exclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New social/emotional skills curriculum and learning materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>More students are able to make healthier decisions</td>
<td></td>
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* i.e. learning and teaching in school  ** i.e. discipline, social support and sense of community in school
inclusive Intervention: Inputs

- Money! £4000
- Needs assessment: Prevalence (overall and by gender) of aggression, bullying, feelings of safety and social support, school disengagement and difficulties at school
- Facilitation of action group (min. 6 students, 6 staff)
- Training in restorative practice (min. 20 teachers)
- Curriculum (6 to 10 hours)
inclusive Intervention: Actions

- Action group meets min. six times
- Restorative practices implemented
- Revised school policies and rules
- Peer mediation strategy revised
- Conferencing
- Social and emotional skills curriculum delivered
inclusive Intervention: Intermediate impacts

- Improved communication
- Student-centred, more responsive:
  - Discipline practices
  - Social support
  - School organisation
- Increased social and emotional skills
- School engagement
- School connectedness
- Increased feelings of safety/security
- Improved decision-making
inclusive Intervention: Student health outcomes

- Reduced aggression/bullying
- Mental health
  - Wellbeing
  - Social/emotional difficulties
  - Anxiety/depressive symptoms
- Reduced risk-taking behaviours
  - Substance use
  - Sexual risks
- Truancy and exclusion
Research/assessment

- 8 schools, randomised to control/intervention arms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility for free school meals</th>
<th>Ofsted Report</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National average or below</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above national average</td>
<td>Good/outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 schools</td>
<td>2 schools</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Total sample: 1200 students
Research/assessment

- Student Questionnaire at baseline and follow-up (year 8)
- Teacher Questionnaire at baseline and follow-up
- Semi-structured interviews with school staff
- Focus groups with teachers (n=4)
- Focus groups with students (n=16)
Research/assessment

- **Primary outcome: Feasibility**
  - Retainment (3 of 4 in each arm)
  - Action group meeting 6 times
  - Reviewed school policies
  - 20+ staff trained
  - Curriculum delivered
  - Intervention considered acceptable to a majority of school’s leadership team
Research/assessment

- Primary indicative outcome: Aggressive behaviour/bullying
  - Physical violence
  - Emotional abuse
  - Provoking behaviours
  - Delinquency
  - Both victim and aggressor

- Scales
  - Aban Aya
  - Gatehouse Bullying Scale
  - Smith Delinquency Scale

- Feasibility study will be used to pilot composite measure of aggression based on these scales
Research/assessment

- Secondary Outcomes
  - Quality of life (PedsQL)
  - Psychological distress (SDQ)
  - Wellbeing (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale)
  - Substance use (self-report)
  - NHS use (self-report)
  - Disciplinary proceedings (student report)
  - Truancy
  - School exclusion

- Process Evaluation
  - School connectedness
  - School engagement
  - Social structure/relationships
  - Participation
  - Social and emotional skills (e.g. empathy, conflict management)
Currently...

- Teacher surveys complete (94% response rate)
- Student surveys complete (95% response rate)
- Data entered
- Needs assessment to be delivered to all schools by end of next week
- Randomization complete
- First action group meetings have been convened/planned
Implications

- Affirm importance of a whole-school approach
- Restorative justice: only feasible with a whole-school approach
- Clear logic model can be tested: examine mechanisms
- Process evaluation in tandem with outcomes from full trial: fuller picture of acceptability and effectiveness
- Opportunity to amend intervention before full trial
Thank you.

- Website: Inclusiveschools.org.uk

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