Outcomes of Teacher Training in the Implementation of School-Based Prevention Programs

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The Premise
- Few studies have investigated the role of teacher training in school-based mental health promotion.
- Mental health education is the least preferred health topic (Maney, Monthley & Carner, 2000).
- Skills and strategies are foreign to usual repertoire and requires staff development (Gingiss, 1994).

Implementation Training

Outcomes
- Understand the rationale for implementing mental health promotion programs in schools
- Demonstrate a positive attitude toward the promotion of mental health in schools
- Demonstrate skills in facilitating Aussie Optimism program activities
- Appreciate ethical issues related to mental health promotion programs and skills for managing these

Train-the-Trainer Aims
- To embed implementation training within current education systems
- To reduce the cost of training
- To promote sustainability

Trainers responsible for:
- promotion
- training all interested teachers
- coaching and support for implementers

Curtin University Team responsible for:
- promotion
- support & mentorship of trainers
- debriefing
Selecting Trainers

- A teaching or student support background
- Enthusiasm for social and emotional well-being;
- Confidence and skills to present training;
- Commitment to maintaining integrity and quality;
- Understanding of outcome focused education;
- An interest in developing student’s knowledge, attitudes and skills in mental health;
- Demonstrated support from school and/or district office; and
- Demonstrated ability to coach and support teachers.

Training the Trainers

5-day Training Program
2 days implementation workshops.
3 days issues specific to being a trainer:
- theoretical background;
- models of school-based implementation;
- adult learning strategies;
- implementation activities; and
- ethical issues.

Teachers Trained

Years = 2003-2005
Schools
SLS &/or OTS = 98% (n = 62)
SLS & OTS = 84% (n = 53)
Workshops = 22
Teachers = 365 Upper Primary
Social Life Skills = 211
Optimistic Thinking Skills = 154

Maintaining Workshop Quality

Pre & Post- Workshop evaluations
- Self-efficacy
- Knowledge
- Awareness-Concern (Steckler, et al., 1992)
- Workshop Feedback

Workshop Feedback

Pre- to Post-Workshop Changes
Workshop Feedback

Percentage

Content Level Content Integration

Average High Very High Combined

Presentation Clarity Presentation Stimulation Workshop Overall

Average High Very High Combined

Awareness-Concern

Based on stage theory of organisational change
Scores range 4-16

Pre-workshop mean scores
Concern = 15.54
Awareness = 11.56
Interest = 14.33

Pre- to Post-Workshop Changes

Mean Score

Concern Awareness Interest

Pre Post

Qualitative Feedback

"Some very valuable information. Even the networking was very helpful. I learnt many things and was opened up and motivated to integrate the program into my daily teaching."

"I feel that the workshop has prepared me to implement the program successfully. I like the way it was structured and feel confident and enthusiastic about making an early start."

"It appears that a genuine effort has been made to address anxiety disorders in young people and practical teaching strategies have been well designed for educators to conduct lessons with faithful outcomes. The process of student/parent surveys and the guiding reference material for Aussie Optimism is of a professional standard and promises good achievements for students."

Conclusions

Teacher training has the potential to play an important role in the successful dissemination of school-based mental health promotion programs.

Training quality can be maintained by a train-the-trainer program that embeds teacher training delivery within relevant systems.

Future research