Dissemination Outcomes for the Aussie Optimism Program:
Preventing Internalising Problems Across a Whole School District.

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The Preventive Intervention Research Cycle
- Identify mental health problems of interest – childhood anxiety & depression.
- Identify modifiable risk & protective factors – social, cognitive & family factors.
- Develop prevention programs, universal, selective & indicated.
- Conduct efficacy & effectiveness trials.
- Facilitate large-scale dissemination with ongoing evaluation.

Dissemination
The dissemination process comprises activities carried out specifically to bring about the spread of an innovation to specific target groups.

Orlandi, 1987, p. 124

The Aussie Optimism Program
Aims to:
- Prevent anxiety & depression.
- Promote mental health by enhancing self esteem, optimism, social & emotional competence.
- Social Life Skills.
- Optimistic Thinking Skills.
- Aussie Optimism for Parents & Families.

Social Life Skills
- Feelings
- Decision making
- Communication
- Assertiveness & Negotiation
- Coping skills
- Social support
Optimistic Thinking Skills
- Thoughts and feelings
- Thinking styles
- Challenging negative thinking styles
- Preparing for adolescence

Program for Parents and Families
- Preparing for the changes ahead
- Working together as a family
- Optimistic thinking
- Friendship, peer pressure and bullying
- Preparing for the move to high school

The Aussie Optimism Dissemination Project
- 3 WA cities – population 139,604.
  - Fremantle, Rockingham & Mandurah.
- 91 government primary schools.
- Random assignment to 3 groups.
  - Intervention & teacher training (30).
  - Intervention, teacher training & coaching (30).
  - Waitlist control (31).
- Implementation over 2 years.
  - Year 6 – 10 hours Social Life Skills.
  - Year 7 – 10 hours Optimistic Thinking Skills & 5 module Parent & Families intervention.

Fremantle – Peel Education District

Dissemination Stages
1. Promoting awareness - providing or seeking information.
2. Persuasion of the relevance & applicability of the innovation.
3. Adoption of the innovation.
4. Changing practice to implement the innovation.
5. Sustaining the innovation over time.

Predictors of Diffusion
- the facilitation process.
- the adequacy of resources available for implementation.
- school leadership.
- teacher characteristics.
- the external environment.
- compatibility of the innovation with existing school policy, culture & priorities.
- external leadership & support.
- characteristics of the innovation.
Stage 1 - Promoting awareness, providing or seeking information.

- Engaging key stakeholders in the external environment – key government departments.
- Engaging district level leadership & support.
- Identifying compatibility of the program with existing Education Department policy, culture, & priorities.

Stage 2 - Persuasion of the relevance & applicability.

- the facilitation process.
- the adequacy of resources available for implementation.
- school leadership.
- compatibility with existing school policy, culture & priorities.

Stage 3 - Adoption of the Program

- Introductory letter & phone call.
- School presentation.
- Principal, teacher, parent & child consent.
- School & project memorandum of understanding.

Stage 4 - Changing practice to implement the program.

Number of Teachers Trained in Aussie Optimism

Number of Students Receiving Aussie Optimism
Predictors of Implementation

Conclusions

• Dissemination can be achieved when;
  – The facilitation process targets both external and school factors.
  – There is compatibility of the program with existing school policy, culture & priorities.
• High levels of implementation can be achieved when quality training & resources are provided.