



Development of a school connectedness component of an adolescent injury prevention program: Lessons for implementation

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School-based injury prevention

- Injury is the leading cause of death among adolescents in Australia
 - Associated with risk taking behaviour (violence, transport, alcohol)
- School-based risk and injury prevention programs have frequently been limited to addressing knowledge of and attitudes toward risks
 - Overlooked the importance of the wider school social context as a protective factor

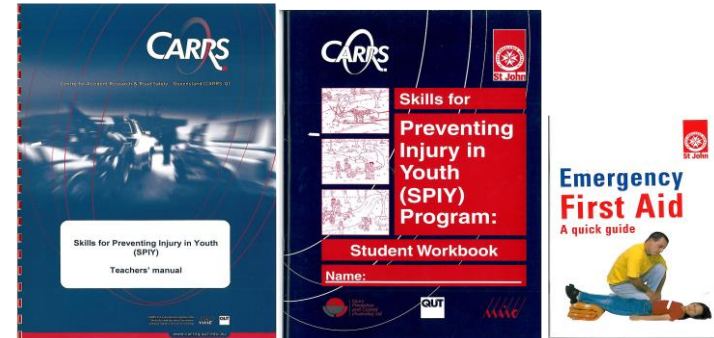
Injury and school connectedness

- Literature - higher levels of school connectedness associated with:
 - Reduced drug and alcohol use (e.g. McNeely & Falci, 2004)
 - Reduced violence (e.g. Dornbusch et al., 2001)
- Preliminary program research (surveys with 540 Qld Grade 9 students) - higher levels of school connectedness also associated with:
 - Reduced transport and violence-related injuries (Chapman et al., 2011)

Skills for Preventing Injury in Youth (SPIY)

- Curriculum integrated injury prevention program for 13-14 year olds
- 8 weekly 50 minute lessons, taught by teachers
- Targets transport, violence and alcohol risks

School-level focus:
School connectedness



Buckley, Chapman, & Sheehan (2006). *Skills for Preventing Injury in Youth: Teachers' Program Manual*. Brisbane: QUT
 Buckley, Chapman, & Sheehan (2006). *Skills for Preventing Injury in Youth: Student Workbook*. Brisbane: QUT

Aim

- Describe the research process undertaken to design a school connectedness component of SPIY:
 - Minimising barriers to implementation
 - Maximising uptake and adherence within schools
- Discuss lessons learned from implementation of the school connectedness program

Predictors of implementation fidelity

- Program providers:
 - Motivation, buy-in, attitudes to program, perceived relevance, self-efficacy for implementation
 - Active support:
 - Project coordinators ('champion' program in the school)
 - Principal/ leadership support (embrace values of program and communicate importance to teachers)
 - Training (decreases resistance and generates commitment)
 - Perceived receptiveness of students

Predictors of implementation fidelity

- Program features:
 - Complexity (complex programs present barrier to adoption and greater scope for variability in delivery)
 - Structure/ standardisation (lesson plan relevance, attractiveness and ease of use)
 - Integration into school hours and operations
 - ★ – Designed with participation of end-users (personal connection and buy-in)

Participatory design method

- Interviews with 14 Qld high school teachers
- Semi-structured interview protocol:
 - Perceptions of school connectedness (benefits; strategies)
 - Preferences for program content (PD session for teachers)

Teacher interviews

Implications for program design

- PD should be conducted within schools and departments
 - *We already know each other and I think we'd be, and they'd be, a lot more honest if it was just their group*
 - Literature: encourages supportive professional network for sustainability; integrate new skills with current practice (Garet et al., 2001; Ingvarson et al., 2005)
- Maximise relevance to staff
 - *Knowing that they'll get some real insight into what goes on with the kids here (would encourage attendance)*
- Consider accessibility
 - *And if they don't have to go on their own time, through school time, that's always pretty attractive*

Teacher interviews

Implications for program content

- Strategies for increasing students' connectedness included as examples for other teachers to work from

- As we're walking down to the oval or whatever you might get them to help you get some stuff. Say, you know; "How're you going? How was your weekend?"
- Everyone should have a little job, to teach that kid to do something, to get something positive out of them

Health & PE teachers' views


Below are some actions recommended by Health & PE teachers to increase students' Connectedness to school:

Warmth & empathy

"It's a lot easier to talk to kids when we're doing prac because, as we're walking down to the oval or whatever you might get them to help you get some stuff. Say, you know, "how're you going? How was your weekend?"

Inclusion

"Everyone should have a little job, to teach that kid to do something, to get something positive out of them...most kids disengaged from school are the kids who think they're not worth anything...So I think by trying to engage them back into something!"



Strength focus

"Every kid just needs to have a success in school, to feel like they belong. And I suppose what we need to do as teachers is find something, a positive success rather than a negative success so they're feeling important!"

Equity & fairness

"You need to know your stuff, what you're doing, you need to be confident. And you gotta be friendly to them, as well as be authoritative. They've got to know that, yep, he's a cool teacher, but if you do something wrong, there's consequences!"

Health & PE teachers' views

Further actions recommended by Health & PE teachers to increase students' Connectedness to school (and how they fit into the WISE Mode).

Teacher Quotes	WISE
"It's a lot easier to talk to kids when we're doing prac because, as we're walking down to the oval or whatever you might get them to help you get some stuff. Say, you know, "How're you going? How was your weekend?"	W
"As a teacher, you gotta be authoritative, but you've also got to be easy going - someone they can talk to. You've got to let the kids trust you"	W
"I think it's probably being a bit more relaxed in class with them sometimes about certain issues. So whether you're doing a safety aspect or you're learning about drugs or whatever, you've just got to be a bit more relaxed with that sort of unit. Let the kids give a lot more input...to actually discuss it and get some trust with the kids"	W, I
"You need to know your stuff, what you're doing, you need to be confident. And you gotta be friendly to them, as well as be authoritative. They've got to know that, yep, he's a cool teacher, but if you do something wrong, there's consequences"	W, I&F
"Kids enjoy you as a teacher taking a bit of care in them"	W
"You might just go over to them, have a look at their work & have a bit of a chat, hey?"	W
"Understand the life these kids live and try to understand that they're not just like when you grew up"	W
"You might call them out during class so, you know, "Ok you threw that shotput then, you need to do this a little bit more, and how were things on the weekend?" or you know?"	W, S
"We do self-esteem stuff in class in Grade 9. I always make them at the start of the term get up and talk about themselves for a minute and do it as well, and I'll tell them something that's not school based"	W, I
"Try and find something that each kid likes to do"	I, S
"Everyone should have a little job, to teach that kid to do something, to get something positive out of them...most kids disengaged from school are the kids who think they're not worth anything...So I think by trying to engage them back into something!"	I, S
"Just talking to kids, finding out what they're really into!"	W, S
"Giving kids skills where they feel confident to go up and ask to initiate a conversation. A lot of kids don't even have that really, they don't feel comfortable talking to an adult"	S, I&F
"A lot of them respond well to being given responsibilities. So you know, in a school situation, where you get some of these kids that are in trouble doing things for you, working with you, they can start kind of small and then they begin to have some major involvement in some event you're working towards"	I
"Give them praise"	S

SPY School Connectedness Workshop - Participant's Workbook

14

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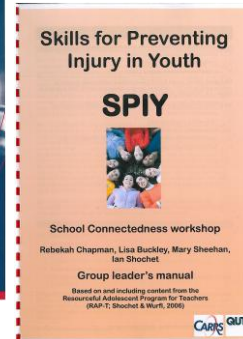
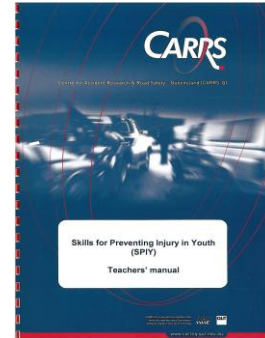
Teacher interviews

Implications for program content

- Knowledge gaps identified – mechanism by which connectedness impacts on risk taking behaviour and injury outcomes
- Specific ideas for content
 - Problem of risk and injury: *You need to sort of know which kids could be at risk, maybe some simple signs or symptoms.*
 - Communication strategies: *I guess just being able to give staff an idea how to speak to the kids about their problems.*

Design, implementation and evaluation

- Interactive PD for SPIY teachers (Health)
 - Implemented in conjunction with SPIY curriculum training
 - Aims: increase teachers' recognition of importance of connectedness in injury prevention; assist with strategies to promote students' connectedness
- Resources: group leaders' manual, participant workbooks, presentation slides
- Follow up support
- Implementation & evaluation in ACT high schools



Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan & Shochet (2009). *Teacher Training Manual: Guide for Increasing School Connectedness alongside SPIY*. Brisbane: QUT
 Chapman, Buckley, Sheehan & Shochet (2009). *Facilitator Manual (and AV resources). Teacher Training: Guide for Increasing School Connectedness alongside SPIY*. Brisbane: QUT.

Challenges & Lessons learned

- Targeting specific departments (*benefits for implementation*) vs. whole of school (*benefits for connectedness*)?
- Two levels of program providers influencing implementation fidelity
 - Program coordinators (us) to teachers
 - Teachers to students (receptiveness of students?)
- Interstate implementation
 - Important for program coordinators to be ‘champions’ and have frequent contact throughout (including follow up support)

Challenges & Lessons learned

- Teacher mobility
 - Can train new teachers; but problematic for a program that is attempting to create a climate of connectedness
- Creating a supportive professional network can be a challenge when just one staff member holds negative views

Conclusions

- Understanding of factors that influence program fidelity should inform design
- User-centred or participatory approach to program design may encourage:
 - Teacher attendance, support, motivation and buy-in
 - Relevance and clarity of program content
 - Usability of program resources for intended audience

Questions?

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