



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA

AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

THE GOODBYE BULLY PROGRAM

Does a manualised resilience-building program
have any positive effects on self-esteem?

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Our Presentation

- Part I: Details of the *Goodbye Bully* program
- Part II: Pre- *Goodbye Bully* program
- Part III: Evaluative research of the *Goodbye Bully* program thus far





Prevalence of Bullying in Schools

- ⦿ A number of studies have investigated the prevalence of bullying.
- ⦿ However, estimates are less than exact given the large variability in methods of assessment and differences in operational definitions of bullying.





Prevalence of Bullying in Schools

- The *Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study* was conducted in 2009 and specifically focused on grades 4 through 9 (ages ranging from 9 to 15 years).
 - Frequent bullying (considered as every few weeks or more often) affected 27% of students → one in four Australian students (Cross et al., 2009).

There is evidently a great need for intervention!



Bullying Defined

Bullying involves one or more of four characteristics:

1. An action intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another which is deliberate and typically recurring over time;
2. An approach intended to cause discomfort which may be either direct or indirect in nature;
3. A hurtful behaviour or action which may be physical, psychological, verbal, cyber-based, or antisocial in nature; and
4. An imbalance of social or physical power within an interpersonal relationship.



Part I: Details of the *Goodbye Bully* Program



A New *Targeted* Intervention: The *Goodbye Bully* Program

- ◎ The *Goodbye Bully* program was developed by the following:
 - Dr Pam Connor; and
 - Six provisional psychologists at the University of Canberra (UC) in 2011.
- ◎ Parents requested “counselling” for their children who were being affected by bullying experiences.
- ◎ The *Goodbye Bully* program is a cognitive-behavioural intervention.



Objectives of the *Goodbye Bully* Program

- Enhance self-esteem;
- Enhance resilience;
- Promote assertive thoughts and behaviour;
- Enable individuals to cope with criticism and accept compliments;
- Provide strategies to implement regarding cyber bullying;
- Build problem-solving skills; and
- Promote healthy friendships.



Existing Bullying Interventions



- ④ ***Whole school interventions*** seek to rework a school's whole atmosphere by addressing students, peer groups, teachers, parents, curriculums, and school-wide policies.
- ④ ***Curriculum interventions*** introduce classroom activities that advocate anti-bullying attitudes and prosocial approaches of conflict resolution. They centre on adjusting group norms.
- ④ ***Targeted interventions*** train groups of bullied individuals in social skills and coping mechanisms; they focus on teaching targets how to stand up to bullies, how to seek help, and how to gain and offer support from other bullied individuals.



How is the *Goodbye Bully* Program Different?

- ◎ The *Goodbye Bully* program draws on techniques that have shown to be beneficial in other programs, including the following:
 - Prosocial skills; and
 - Self-esteem boosters.
- ◎ The *Goodbye Bully* further introduces techniques that have not yet been evaluated, including the following:
 - Specific relaxation exercises; and
 - Positive self mottos.



How is the *Goodbye Bully* Program Different?

The *Goodbye Bully* program is unique in its incorporation of various coping mechanisms and cognitive aspects of relations, rather than solely focusing on social behaviours. It focuses on building resilience rather than changing attitudes.



For Whom is the Program Designed?

- ◎ The University of Canberra Psychology Clinic offers the program to two age groups:
 - Individuals aged 6-8 years; and
 - Individuals aged 9-12 years.



- ◎ This selection was related to the prevalence of bullying being most prominent in late Primary School. For this reason, the program is designed for school-aged children.



Duration of the *Goodbye Bully* Program

- The *Goodbye Bully* program is 8 weeks in duration.
- Each session is 1.5 hours (with a break), from 5:30pm to 7pm.



Participants and Facilitators

- Each therapy group consists of approximately 10 individuals.
- Each group is facilitated by 3 provisional psychologists.



Parent Involvement of the *Goodbye Bully* Program

- ◎ Parents attend their own separate sessions in weeks 1, 4, and 8.
- ◎ These sessions are designed to do the following:
 - Encourage group support;
 - Open discussion regarding the helpfulness and progression of the program; and
 - Keep parents informed of the communicated concepts.



The *Goodbye Bully* Weekly Program

- ⦿ There is a manual for facilitators to follow and structure each session.
- ⦿ A handbook is given to each child to keep:
 - To complete work sheets and practice tasks;
 - To be reminded of strategies; and
 - To follow on with in-session activities.



The *Goodbye Bully* program

- ◉ Week 1: **Overview of the Program** – group familiarisation and rules, definition of bullying, the causes, relaxation.
- ◉ Week 2: **Self-Esteem** (definition, its importance and development, low self-esteem + boosting), relaxation.
- ◉ Week 3: **Thinking Assertively** (definition, assertive rights, 3 communication styles [assertive, passive, and aggressive], role plays, the connection between thoughts-feelings-behaviour).
- ◉ Week 4: **Behaving Assertively** (fighting thoughts, acknowledging feelings, using “I” statements, empathic assertion and consequences).



The *Goodbye Bully* program

- ① Week 5: Criticism & Compliments (definitions, assertive responses to criticism, difference between constructive and destructive criticism → how to cope with each, strategies to accept and give compliments).
- ② Week 6: Cyber Bullying (definition, comparisons to 'traditional' bullying, the effects of cyber bullying, group think, upstand vs bystand, coping strategies).
- ③ Week 7: Healthy Friendships and Getting Along with Others (define good friend, how to be a good friend, healthy vs non-healthy friendships, how to get along with others).
- ④ Week 8: Problem Solving and Goal Setting.



Part II: Pre- *Goodbye* *Bully* Program



How are Participants Recruited?

- The program is advertised in newsletters of all Primary Schools of Canberra;
 - Parents approaching the UC Psychology Clinic for one-on-one therapy for their child/ren may be internally referred to the program; and
 - Word of mouth.
- 
- Parents indicate an interest in the program by either calling the UC Psychology Clinic or by emailing the Clinic Director (Dr Pamela Connor).





The Screening Interview

- Parents are invited to attend the UC Psychology Clinic for a screening interview to determine the suitability of the program for the child's needs.
- The screening interview is one hour long.
- The parent/s and child both attend, although are interviewed separately.
 - Each interview is conducted by two provisional psychologists (thus 4 per family).



The Screening Interview

- ◎ Parents are asked the following:
 - About the nature of their child's bullying;
 - How long the bullying has taken place;
 - About any intervention strategies that have been trialled;
 - About the impact of the bullying on their child; and
 - General background information.



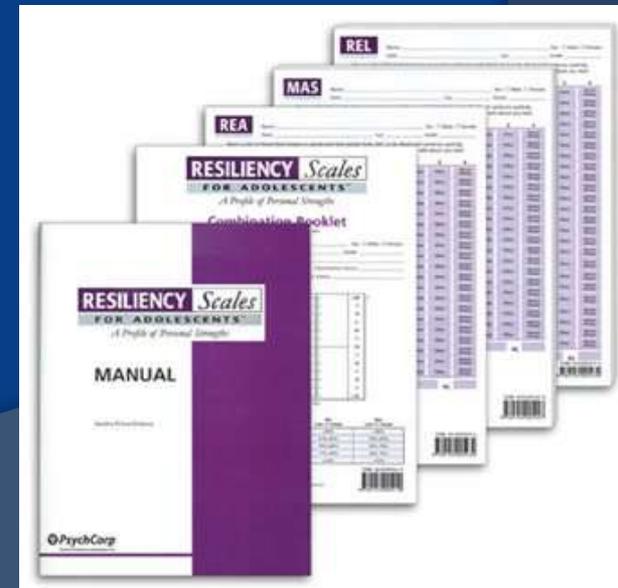
The Screening Interview

- ◎ Children are asked about the following:
 - The nature of their experience with bullying and how long it has lasted;
 - Their current friendships and perceived ability to make friends;
 - Their perception of support received;
 - Their feelings; and
 - Their concentration at school.
- ◎ Children also complete 3 inventories.



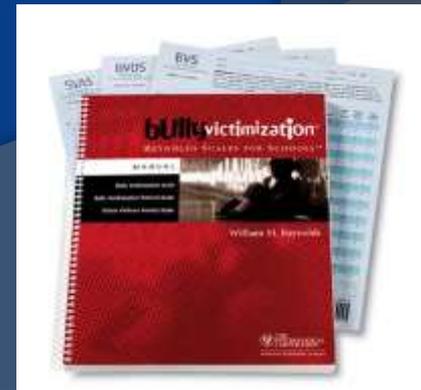
1. Resiliency Scale for Children

- A tool to profile personal strengths and vulnerability.
- Consists of 3 standalone global scales, including the following:
 - Sense of Mastery;
 - Sense of Relatedness; and
 - Emotional Reactivity.



2. Reynolds Bully Victimization Scale

- Provides identification of those who are being bullied and those engaging in bullying behaviour.
- Measures psychological response to bullying and determines the internalising and externalising nature of distress.
 - Evaluates anxiety about the school as a safe environment.



3. Piers Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale²

- ⦿ Provides a complete picture of self-concept.
- ⦿ Subscales address the following:
 - Physical Appearance and Attributes;
 - Freedom from Anxiety;
 - Intellectual and School Status;
 - Behavioural Adjustment;
 - Happiness and Satisfaction; and
 - Popularity.



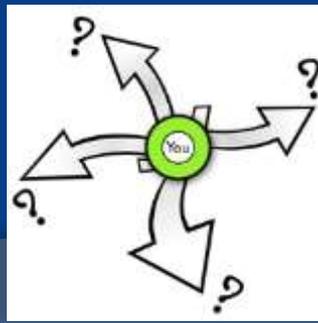
Suitability for the Program

- A decision regarding suitability of the program to the child's needs is made following the screening interview process.
- All 4 provisional psychologists (interviewers) discuss the presenting problem and corresponding suitability of the program.
- Individual cases are also discussed with the supervisor of the program (Dr Pamela Connor).



Suitability for the Program

- Children who are not considered suitable for the program include the following:
 - Those who may benefit more from individual, one-on-one, therapy (e.g., if traumatised from the bullying);
 - Those on the Autism Spectrum;
 - Those who display marked behavioural problems or oppositional behaviours during the screening; or
 - If parents are unable to attend the parent sessions.
- Such individuals are offered alternative options.



Part III: Evaluative
Research of the *Goodbye
Bully* Program Thus Far



Evaluations of Existing Bullying Interventions

- The literature on bullying program evaluations has only recently reached a level that permits synthesis of findings across studies.
- The majority of evaluation meta-analyses seem to have been conducted regarding *whole-school* bullying programs only.
- These meta-analyses suggest that intervention programs vary in their outcomes. Some studies have reported positive outcomes whereas others have conveyed little or no positive impacts.



Focus of Evaluation and Research Question

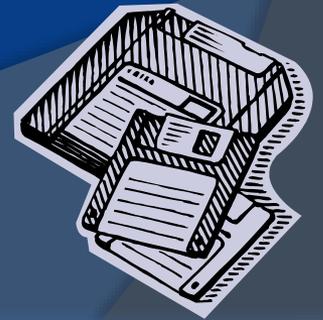


- It is imperative that an intervention be assessed to ascertain whether it is addressing its goals.
- The evaluation of the *Goodbye Bully* program thus far has centred on evaluating whether “a manualised resilience-building program has any positive effects on self-esteem?”
 - The evaluation aimed to determine whether any improvements were maintained one year after the intervention period.



Evaluation of *Goodbye Bully*

- A descriptive, multiple case-study approach was adopted.
- This involved observations of a group of seven clients aged 9-12 years over an 8-week period of program implementation during 2013.
- Both quantitative data and qualitative data were taken into consideration.



Evaluation of *Goodbye Bully*

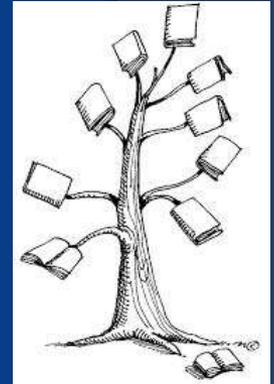
Sources included the following:

Qualitative data:

- Parent interviews;
- Client interviews;
- Five open-ended questions; and
- Observer notes (comments, behaviour, changes, and the differences between individuals).

Quantitative data:

- *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale*².
- All participants were asked to complete this on three occasions (pre-intervention, post-intervention, and one year after the intervention).



Pre and Post Tests (Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale²)

CLIENT	TOTAL		BEHAVIOURAL ADJUSTMENT		INTELLECTUAL AND SCHOOL STATUS		PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND ATTRIBUTES		FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY		POPULARITY		HAPPINESS AND SATISFACTION	
	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST	PRE	POST
A	41	56	41	54	48	54	42	48	48	58	31	54	43	51
B	38	46	62	62	40	46	32	40	39	48	33	41	47	59
C	41	51	62	54	42	51	29	52	81	58	36	44	43	47
D	61	65	49	49	65	65	58	65	65	72	50	54	59	61
E	43	52	39	62	51	46	42	52	54	54	41	50	59	51
F	43	51	43	43	51	42	42	42	43	48	33	33	47	47
G	69	63	54	62	65	59	58	58	65	58	68	54	59	59



Open-Ended Questions Answered by Clients

◎ Participants' feedback:

- “Before the *Goodbye Bully* program I was 5/10 to deal with bullies, now I am 10/10.”
- “The *Goodbye Bully* program taught me how to act assertively and how to not act passively or aggressively.”
- “The *Goodbye Bully* program helped me with many strategies for meditating and being more assertive towards the bully.”
- “The program helped me to realise I am not the cause behind being bullied. The only thing I would change is the name of the program.”



Open-Ended Questions Answered by Parents



◎ Parents' feedback:

- “[My child] has learnt different ways to express himself.”
- “The facilitators were accessible to both the children and parents, and explained the program clearly and succinctly at both overview and more detailed levels.”
- “[My child] is now less likely to bottle up his feelings/explode. He has learnt to be more assertive, speaking loudly and clearly when explaining how he feels. He is also now more aware of others' feelings.”



Observer's Notes

- ◎ For example, notes regarding client A:
 - What is low self-esteem?
 - “Feeling sad about yourself.”
 - What does low self-esteem look like?
 - “Being excluded.”
 - Assertive responses:
 - “Sorry, but I get a pitch nearly every game.”
 - “I like my clothes thanks.”
 - How would you describe a friend?
 - “Someone you share likes with and can trust.”
 - What could you do if someone tells you that they are going to hurt someone else?
 - “Speak up – not only to them, but to someone else.”



Preliminary Results

- Preliminary results suggest that all participants, to different degrees, noted greater resiliency and strengthened self-concepts.
- Although some benefited more than others, it is significant to note that all participants reported improvements nonetheless.
- Will review preliminary results in July, after gaining follow-up data of all clients.





Where to From Here?



- ⦿ Waiting on one-year follow-up data in order to gain a more complete picture of any lasting positive effects of the *Goodbye Bully* program.
- ⦿ With the above data, facilitators will review the program according to feedback in aim of continuously improving its effectiveness.
- ⦿ Discussions regarding possibly offering the program at Primary Schools as opposed to (or in addition to) an external clinic.
- ⦿ Based on feedback from clients, discussion regarding possibly renaming the program.





Acknowledgements

- Dr. Pamela Connor, for her encouragement and feedback, as well as her willingness in allowing me to research the *Goodbye Bully* program.
- The provisional psychologists who helped design the program.
- Participants of the *Goodbye Bully* program as well as their parents. I am extremely grateful for their cooperation.
- A big thank you to my colleagues who facilitated the program. They were not only skilled and proficient within their roles as facilitators, but continuously displayed a great deal of trust and belief in my ability as a researcher.

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QUESTIONS?

Prevalence of Bullying in Schools



- ◎ It is predicted that 200 million children around the world are bullied by their peers.
- ◎ It is approximated that one in seven primary-school aged children are either currently bullied or have been bullied in the past.
- ◎ It is suggested that one in six students are bullied by peers each week.



Part III: What Impact does Bullying have on Young People?



Impacts of Bullying

- ◎ There is growing recognition of the deleterious impact of bullying. Bullying can, and often does, have long-lasting significant impacts on those who are bullied, including the following:
 - Internalising impacts;
 - Risk of harm to self and suicide;
 - Academic impacts;
 - Health impacts;
 - Long-lasting impacts; and
 - **Self-esteem.**



The Relationship between Bullying and Self-Esteem

- Childhood years are vital in shaping self-esteem.
- If children are constantly bullied, then it is logical that their self-confidence will be threatened.
- Bullied children may come to dislike themselves for their so-called negative qualities.



The Relationship between Bullying and Self-Esteem

- Children with low self-esteem generally display characteristics of the following:
 - Self-rejection;
 - Self-disappointment; and
 - Self-disapproval (they may desire change within themselves).



The Importance of Youth on the Development of Self-Esteem



- The psychological development of youth is an extremely significant factor in shaping an individual's self-esteem.
- There is potential that, at such a fragile stage in life, self-esteem may become permanently damaged or alternatively require a long process of recovery.
- One's self-esteem either encourages or discourages the individual to approach new tasks and situations; it is a significant aspect of psychological functioning.
- Self-esteem has flow-on effects to other features of one's persona → self-esteem is vital in building resilience, self-concept, and social skills.

