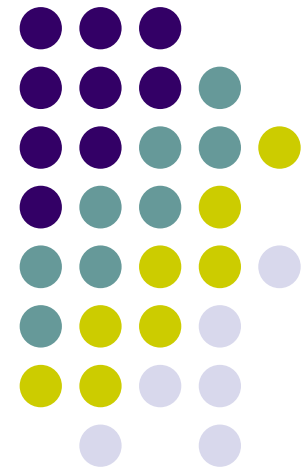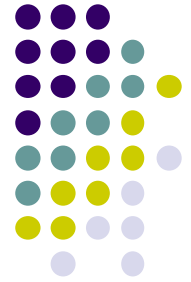# INCLUSIVE: Reducing school aggression through a whole-school restorative justice intervention.
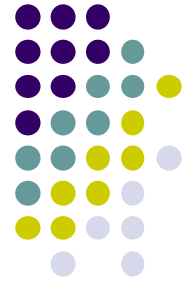
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Overview

- 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
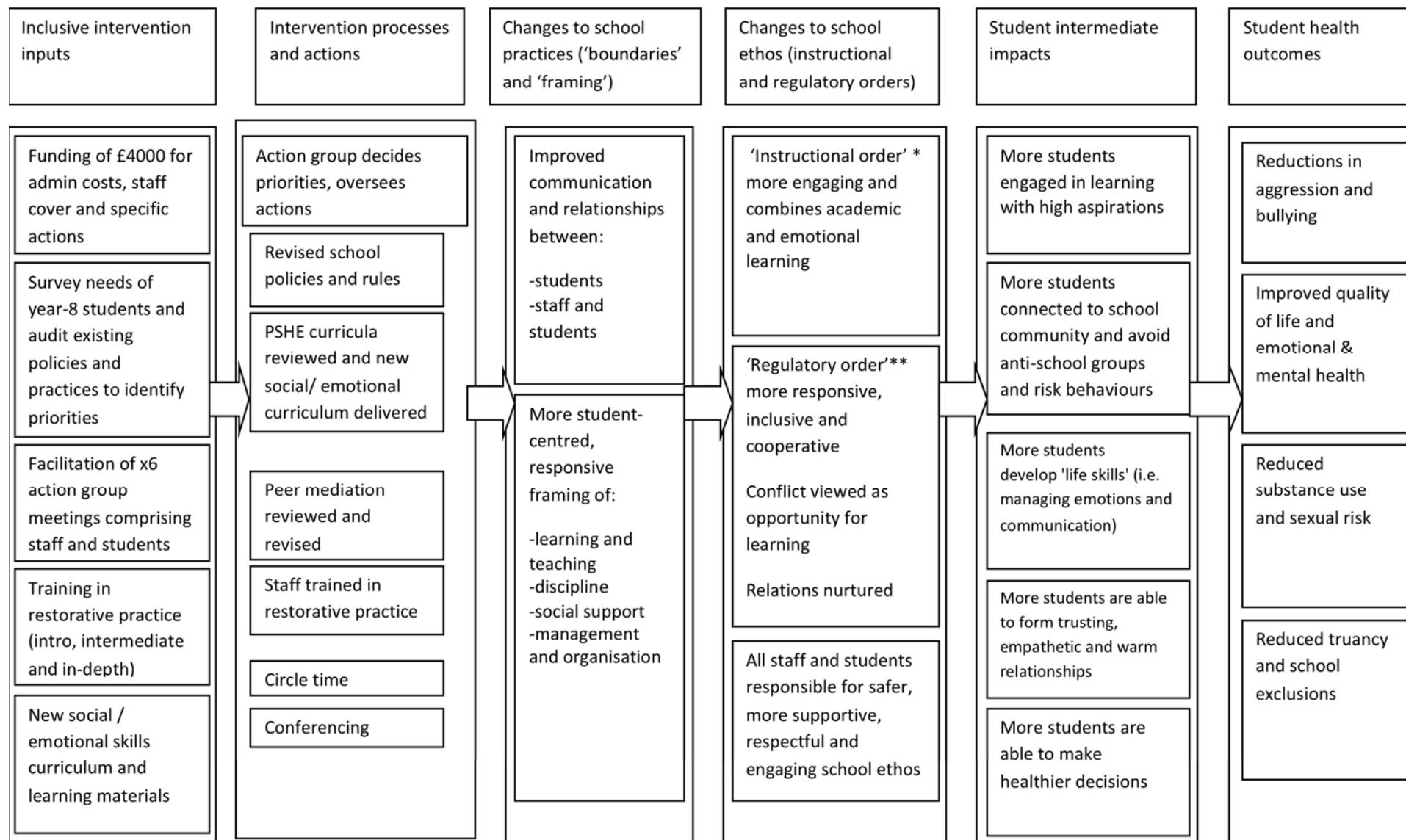
General aim

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

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

* 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/emotinal difficulties
  - Anxiety/depressive symptoms
- Reduced risk-taking behaviours
  - Substance use
  - Sexual risks
- Truancy and exclusion

Research/assessment

- 8 schools, randomised to control/intervention arms

		Ofsted Report	
		Satisfactory	Good/outstanding
Eligibility for free school meals	National average or below	2 schools	2 schools
	Above national average	2 schools	2 schools

- 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, conflect 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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