



## **Summary:**

### **Report on developing monitoring and evaluation of ZAP courses**

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### **Background**

**Building on earlier experience, the ZAP assertiveness course aims to help children and young people stay safe from bullying.**

**Kidscape wished to have an external, rigorous evaluation to look at the outcomes which are achieved. They wanted to have evidence of what difference they are making.**

**Charities Evaluation Services (CES) was asked to provide both the support for the overhaul of the monitoring systems, and the evaluation, with special attention to outcomes. The focus was on ZAP courses run at Kidscape offices for children and young people, with also some reference to the Web site.**

**Each ZAP course runs over one day, training and supporting the child to be better able to deal with bullying. There is a separate session for parents so they know what their children are learning, and can help each other. There is further support by e-mail, phone, helpline and written material.**

**This is a brief summary of the findings of the CES. The full report is available from Kidscape.**

### **Evaluation**

#### **Intended outcomes of ZAP courses**

**ZAP courses are very successful indeed. They achieve the specific benefits for children which they set out to achieve. Several weeks after the course, children are experiencing the following benefits.**

### **Children are more confident**

Children's confidence was low before they came to ZAP. Afterwards they felt confident, and depression because of bullying substantially decreased. They felt better able to deal with bullying successfully.

### **Children are using the strategies**

Children were using the strategies they had learned, and the strategies were working. All strategies were used by at least some children, and some strategies were particularly successful, such as 'fogging'.

### **Children are seeking appropriate help and support**

Children felt more able to seek appropriate help and support, and did so.

### **There is less truancy and harming**

Nearly half the children had been truanting before, but afterwards truanting all but disappeared. Thinking about self harming, and actually self harming, also dramatically diminished.

### **The strategies were successfully preventing bullying**

All the children were experiencing bullying before the course. Afterwards, 70% were no longer being bullied. Of those still being bullied, most were being bullied less. Where children were no longer being bullied, most attributed this to help from ZAP (61%). It is somewhat surprising that this figure is not even higher, in the context of all the other results. Participants may have found this particular question, which invited them to select possible reasons why they were no longer being bullied, somewhat difficult, and attributing causality in research of this kind is not easy. It is important to remember that 100% of children were being bullied before, and only 30% afterwards. This strongly suggests a powerful effect of the ZAP course.

Kidscape has been very clear about what it intended to achieve. The above results were measured by questionnaire, and are further supported by the telephone interviewers by the evaluator and by the spontaneous feedback. It is therefore possible to have full confidence in these excellent results.

### **Strategies for dealing with bullying**

Teaching children specific strategies for dealing with bullying is a central part of the ZAP course. The strategies are all subsequently used by at least 40% of the children. All are successful to some extent and some are very successful. It is also interesting that 31% of children say they also develop their own different strategies.

ZAP courses include a relatively high proportion of autistic spectrum, statemented, dyslexic and dyspraxic children, and those with developmental delay and other medical considerations.

### **Other effects of ZAP courses**

For many parents and families, the value of ZAP went beyond benefits to their child. Parents described situations of parental and family distress, often severe, substantially helped by ZAP. This is an important aspect of the work.

### ***Beneficial Feedback***

Finally, the beneficial practice of circulating spontaneous feedback internally should be continued. To end this evaluation, there follows an example, a communication from a young woman who attended the ZAP in 2003.

'To everyone at Kidscape

Thank you all so much for the help you gave to me three years ago... it helped me so much. Since then my life has changed and I would like to thank you for helping me to make the first changes. Without Kidscape I don't know what would have happened to me. I don't even know if I would be alive. So I feel I owe you my life. Hopefully in the future I will be able to help you as much as you have helped me.

I am taking my GCSEs and have high hopes. I'm going to college next year and have a great group of friends that I know are there for me.

Keep up the brilliant work. It saves lives!