

KIDSCAPE ZAP ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING YEAR 2 REPORT



Period Covered July 2000 – August 2001
Report Compiled October 2001

ZAP is Kidscape's tailor-made assertiveness training course for children aged 8 to 16 who have been, or are being bullied. In the period covered by this report, 135 children, mainly from the Greater London area attended ZAP sessions.

Key Findings

- Bullying was reduced by three fifths - 61% of participants reported that they were no longer being bullied.
- Where bullying continued, 73% of the children who attended ZAP courses 'were bullied less', and importantly, none of the participants reported that they had been bullied more.
- 100% of the children who attended a ZAP session found it to be 'useful' or 'very useful'. 100% felt that they had been helped to stand up for themselves more effectively, 82% reported an increase in self-confidence and 96% identified an improvement in self-esteem. In addition, the number of participants who found it difficult to make friends decreased by 17%
- The number of children who actually truanted was reduced by a third while there was a 34% reduction in those wanting to stay away from school.
- There was a 61% reduction in the number of children who reported that they were feeling depressed about being bullied
- No children self harmed after attending a ZAP session. [14% reported doing so before attending a ZAP session.]
- 89% of the children reported that they had used the skills that they had learned during the ZAP course, and encouragingly, 54% went on to develop some anti-bullying strategies of their own.

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SECTION I – Background Information

Introduction

ZAP is Kidscape’s tailor-made assertiveness training course for children aged 8 to 16 who have been, or are being bullied. 121 children attended during the first year pilot project [1999 – 2000] and 135 attended in the period covered by this report [July 2000 – August 2001].

A formal evaluation of Kidscape’s ZAP course was undertaken on completion of the first year pilot study. This included an evaluation of the course with ‘before’ and ‘after’ comparative analysis to determine its impact on those who attended. The key findings were most encouraging:

- Most notably, bullying was reported to be reduced by two thirds
- Over 80% of the children reported that after having attended a ZAP course they felt more confident and more able to stand up for themselves
- In addition, no children self-harmed after ZAP as opposed to 16% who reported this behaviour in advance of the session.
- It was particularly encouraging to note that 92% of the children reported that they had used the skills they had learnt through ZAP
- 64% left the course to develop some anti-bullying strategies of their own.

Several implications for development emerged from the evaluation of this first year pilot project. These have informed the planning of current ZAP sessions.

- a) Based on our pilot group feedback, we adjusted the course content to build a more holistic perspective into the ZAP course to “bully-proof” children by
- Including materials such as, the ‘All About Me’ booklet, which aims to develop and enhance the participants’ self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem.
 - Introducing the ‘Graffiti Wall’ activity (this gives the children the opportunity to share feelings and vent frustration related to bullying behaviour).
 - Actively encouraging the children to become involved in a wider range of activities both inside and outside school.
 - Developing full-day sessions for parents. These PAZAPs aim to equip parents with the knowledge and skills to help and support their children.

b) Referral procedures

- In the second year of ZAP we introduced follow-up sessions for some participants to provide additional support in relation to specific developmental areas such as anger management and conflict resolution.
- We have also increased the number of courses organised per year.
- In the past few months special ZAP courses have been arranged for individuals who could not attend our group sessions.
- We have also run courses in several schools (including secondary, special needs and nursery) in various locations throughout the UK.
- In keeping with our aim to promote ZAP courses more widely, ZAP information and application forms are on the Kidscape website. Hotlinks are also provided to other caring organisations.

The ZAP Hypothesis

The evidence gathered for the Year 1 Report supported our original hypothesis, namely that an intensive one-day course for children who have been, or are being bullied would be instrumental in breaking the negative emotional and social cycle caused by bullying. Our evidence suggests that participation in a ZAP session:

- Reduces the incidence of bullying that the child suffers
- Improves the child's self-esteem and confidence
- Increases the child's school attendance
- Reduces the child's self-harm attempts

The Impetus Behind ZAP

Recent research¹ shows that bullying may cause distress in children and later in adulthood if not dealt with effectively. In the short-term, it leads to feelings of low self-esteem and a negative self-image. Indeed, a significant number of individuals who have been bullied lose self-confidence and become anxious and withdrawn. Many school-aged victims start to truant in an attempt to avoid the bullying. Although some schools **do** have effective procedures and practices to deal with bullying *incidents*, many are not able or willing to provide specific programmes to support the victim.

Depending on a number of factors, such as the type, length and severity of the bullying, family circumstances, etc., a disturbing proportion of these victims become depressed and self-harm. Every year, there are between 10 and 14 suicides as well as several hundred attempted suicides that The Coroner's Office and The Home Office attribute to bullying.

Studies² have proved that in the longer-term, victims may develop communication difficulties leading to problems maintaining professional & personal relationships.

¹ Kidscape Long-Term Effects of Bullying Survey 1995-1997 (National Lottery funded and presented at the Law Society Conference April 1998)

² Kidscape Long-Term Effects of Bullying Survey 1995-1997 (National Lottery funded and presented at the Law Society Conference April 1998)

Over the past 17 years Kidscape has gained insight into effective ways to deal with bullying through its extensive training programmes, helpline, conferences and resource provision. Training programmes tailored to meet the needs of young children led Kidscape and others to conclude that 'early intervention and appropriate support for victims is essential to break the negative cycle'³.

There has always been a need for services and support for victims as illustrated by the huge number of calls received by Kidscape each year from parents of children who are being bullied (over 17,000 in 2000-2001). Many parents ask for specific courses which will teach their child assertiveness techniques. The ZAP course aims to meet the ongoing requests for assertiveness training.

ZAP Support

The second year of ZAP has been possible due to the continuing financial commitment and optimism of seven trusts: The Corporation of London's Bridge House Estates Trust Fund, The Persula Foundation, the Ruben and Elisabeth Rausing Trust, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Cadbury Schweppes Foundation, The Mercers' Company and The Toy Trust. To all of these organisations, Kidscape and the families are most grateful.

ZAP Course Objectives

The course was designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- To provide a range of anti-bullying strategies and techniques
- To provide understanding & supportive adults who listen to, and acknowledge, the bullying experiences and their effects.
- To enable the children to 'stand up for themselves' by providing them with:
 - assertiveness training
 - confidence & self-esteem activities
 - an opportunity to develop an understanding of the causes and consequences of bullying
- To lessen the children's sense of isolation by:
 - providing an opportunity for the children to share their experiences and feelings with others in similar situations
 - providing a safe and nurturing environment
 - providing a letter network which enables the children to support each other and correspond with their new friends from the group
 - providing supportive adults who can offer regular support, if necessary.
- To learn more about the impact & range of bullying behaviour
- To develop effective intervention strategies which will support and empower the people who are being bullied

³ Professor Arnold Goldstein Syracuse University USA; Low Level Aggression, First Steps on the Ladder to Violence 1999.

- To reduce truancy
- To improve involvement with the school and community
- To improve future job prospects

These remain the key objectives of the ZAP course.

Attendance & Selection

The evaluation of the attendance and selection procedures established for the first year pilot project confirmed that these were generally very effective. These therefore remain in place with a few minor adjustments and developments. The children attend the course voluntarily. The majority became aware of the course as a result of their parents' contact with Kidscape's Helpline and a few referrals originate from Social Workers, Doctors & Teachers.

Typically the participant's parent or guardian calls Kidscape's helpline to seek advice and support for their child or children. The Helpline Advisors offer a range of advice and ideas for dealing with the problem. The nature of the advice varies considerably depending on the circumstances (e.g. the type of bullying, the action already taken, the support or response of the school, etc.)

If the bullied child⁴ is truanting, depressed, self-harming, aggressive or feeling suicidal the Advisor would suggest attendance on the course. The Advisor normally discusses the benefits of the course with the parent and sends them an application form. Information relating to the ZAP course, as well as an application form, can also now be found on the parents' section of the Kidscape website.

While there is no charge for attendance, parents or guardians are asked to provide a £10 deposit that is returned to them on the day. This encourages a sense of commitment once a place has been reserved.

The Role of the Pre-ZAP Questionnaire

'Application' continues to be made by the completion of a Pre-ZAP Questionnaire (see attached sample). Although, no child is refused attendance on the course, in a few cases alternative dates have to be given. This is either because some children are unable to attend on the stated dates, or it is felt that the child's needs could be better met in a different group. During the period covered by this report several tailor-made courses had to be created to support children with a specific learning difficulty such as autism, ADHD, dyspraxia or visual impairment. These courses had the same learning objectives, but different teaching methods were employed and there were higher staff ratios.

⁴ To avoid using the term victim the word 'bullied' is used to refer to either girls or boys who are or have been bullied.

The questionnaire was primarily designed to provide a detailed description of the bullying and its effects for research, evaluation and development purposes. It gives an overview of the child's outlook, views and expectations prior to attending the course.

Importantly, the application questionnaire also serves as a means of obtaining background information on the individual child. This helps to ensure that the child's needs are met on the day. It also enables Kidscape staff to provide additional support prior to the course. For example, in cases of reported self-harm Advisors or Trainers make contact immediately with the child and parent to ensure there is appropriate assistance from other parties.

Following the analysis of user feedback from the first year pilot group we adjusted the pre-session questionnaire. Most significantly, as a response to parents' concern we removed the two questions relating to suicide:

“Have you thought about committing suicide?” and
“Have you attempted suicide?”

We retained the more general question about *self-harm* as this information helps us to both obtain a fuller picture of the child's situation, and to provide an appropriate level of support. In addition, we changed the order and layout of some of the questions in the application questionnaire to add to both the clarity and 'user-friendliness'.

Methodology

Evidence for the impact of the course continues to be gathered using the following methods:

1) Pre-ZAP Questionnaire

This provides key basic information about the child, the nature of the bullying and details of any special needs.

2) General Observations

Kidscape staff note the children's behaviour & attitude as they arrive at the course venue, during the day and as they leave. This includes their perceived level of self-confidence, their interactions with other children, parents, trainer and staff, as well as their personal & social skills (i.e. the degree and type of involvement with others during the session and at break-times, etc.).

3) Feedback

The children are asked to complete a course evaluation form. On receipt of their comments they receive a gift voucher. The promise of this 'reward' acts as a strong incentive to return the form!

4) Follow-up Questionnaire

A comprehensive follow-up questionnaire is sent to **all** children six months after the course date (see attached sample). This survey, together with the 'application questionnaire', provides a detailed 'before' & 'after' comparison.

A summary of the evidence gathered using the methods outlined above, as well as an analysis of the data, is provided in Section II.

SECTION II – Evidence & Analysis

1) General Observations

Arrival

Most children arrive at the course venue with either their parent or guardian and a significant number of them appear to be anxious, quiet and withdrawn, find it difficult to maintain eye contact and to engage in conversation. Some participants are reluctant to leave their parent or guardian and appear immobile and tense.

Interestingly, a small number display other types of behaviour that *could* be associated with children who have good levels of confidence and self-esteem. They are for example, more talkative, animated and interested in their surroundings. However, we have found that in some cases these behaviour patterns or traits could be attributed to anxiety and stress. Some of these initially 'pro-social' children tended to become either hyperactive or withdrawn when bullying issues were explored during the ZAP session.

During ZAP

The children are often initially reluctant to participate and to interact with each other. Many avoid eye contact and fiddle nervously with their clothes or small objects such as pens and pencils.

The sessions are deliberately structured to establish an appropriate ethos and to encourage the group to bond at an early stage. In most cases, this is very successful. The warm-up and climate building games are popular and provoke much nervous/therapeutic giggling. Within a relatively short space of time, most groups begin to work co-operatively, sharing their experiences and involving themselves in the activities.

After ZAP

From our own observations and from feedback, the majority of children find the day very rewarding. To varying degrees they enthuse about what they have enjoyed and how the activities have helped them. Their animated and relaxed mood leads to a high degree of positive interaction between the group and members of the Kidscape staff. Friendships are established.

A quote from a parent's 'thank you' letter highlights just how much self- confidence children who have been bullied can gain as a result of a one-day course:

"I can honestly say that you change these children's lives. I saw the children who came for the course in the morning, they all looked so nervous; almost all of them sat stooping down, worried about each other. By the end of the day, I could not believe the change in them. They were happy and confident. They were reassuring each other and I have never seen a group of children with so much sympathy and solidarity."

A short extract from another parent's letter underlines how a ZAP session can enhance a child's self-esteem:

"I want you to know how much the session helped my daughter. To hear her nattering away about the situation more openly and with such confidence was heart-warming. My daughter came away absolutely glowing about the comments written about her. They gave her dented self-esteem an absolutely tremendous boost."

In a few cases however, it is clear that follow-up work is needed, particularly with individuals who have been bullied over a long period of time and where there are complex issues to resolve. In these cases Kidscape staff offer follow-up support.

2) Feedback

The children complete feedback forms (see attached sample) to give us their evaluation of ZAP. The quotation below gives an indication of the type of comments received.

"I learned a lot about bullying and how to cope with it. The staff were very nice and I had a lot of fun with them. They made me feel relaxed and comfortable. I enjoyed it very much."

Many participants liked the informal atmosphere enhanced by friendly, supportive staff, 'goodie bags' - and the Pizza Hut food!

3) Analysis of the Pre- and Follow-up Questionnaires

The analysis that follows is intended to provide the following:

- 1) Quantitative analysis and an explanation of the results
- 2) A comparison with, or reference to, the results of other questions
- 3) A means of highlighting areas for further research
- 4) Where the data is inconclusive, a feasible interpretation

THE VALUE OF ZAP SESSIONS

Please Note: Questions 1 to 8 were answered by ALL children

Q. 1 Did you find ZAP useful?

100% said that ZAP was either very useful or useful

Q. 2-4 How did ZAP help you?

100% reported they could now stand up for themselves better [N.B. 88% of the first year pilot group identified an improvement in this area.]

82% reported they are now more confident

96% reported that they felt better about themselves [compared with 88% of the first year pilot group]

It seems reasonable to state therefore that a large majority of the children felt that they had benefited directly from attending a ZAP course. The above data indicates clearly that they were happier, more confident and more able to stand up for themselves. It should be noted however that although 100% of the children reported that they could stand up for themselves better, 39% are nevertheless still being bullied.

Q. 5, 6 Which ZAP skills have you used?

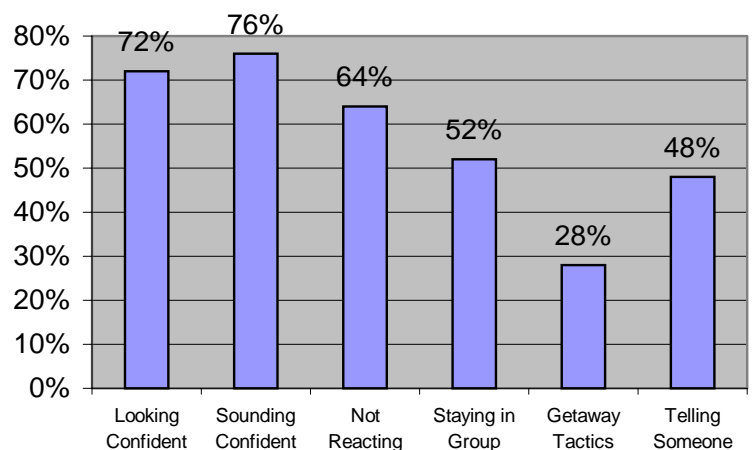
89% have used the skills they learnt during the ZAP session to deal with the bullying:

76% try to 'sound confident' (up from 48% in Year 1)

64% try 'not reacting'

48% 'tell someone'

The specific skills that the children learnt on the course were clearly very relevant and useful. The young people were much more able to take control of a situation and appear to be less frightened in front of the bully. Only 28% children favoured 'getaway tactics'. There could be several reasons for this: they may view such strategies as 'running away' and not as a way of trying to stop the bullying. The possibility that the children need additional support during ZAP to learn how to use this approach effectively cannot be ignored.



Q. 7 Have you done anything else to try to stop the bullying?

54% of the children developed some anti-bullying strategies of their own.

THE CHILDREN'S CURRENT SITUATION

Q. 8 Are you still being bullied?

61% of children who attended the ZAP course are now no longer being bullied

While we could assume that this significant decrease in the number of children being bullied is primarily due to the children's attendance on the course, this conclusion cannot be drawn from this data alone. It must be acknowledged that several factors such as, the time lapse, could account for a reduction in the rates of bullying. Subsequent questions, which ask specifically about ZAP, do however provide objective evidence to support this assumption.

Note: Questions 9 - 15 refer ONLY to the 39% of children who are still being bullied

Q. 9 Are you being bullied less or more than before ZAP?

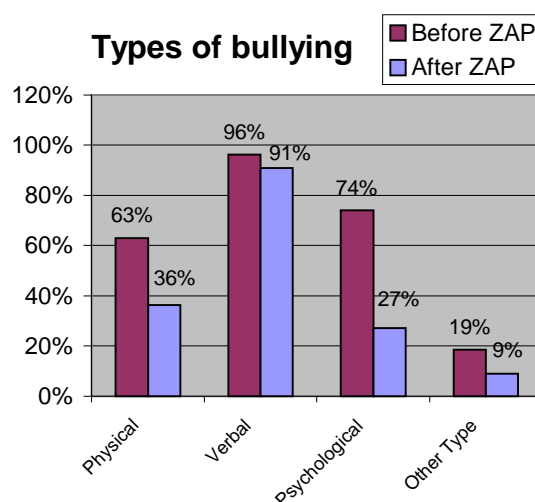
Of those children still being bullied, 73% are being bullied less

It is encouraging to note that of none of the children reported that the bullying had become more severe. By contrast, 11% of the young people in the first year pilot group stated that the bullying had intensified.

Q. 10 What kind of bullying are you experiencing now?

All types of bullying have been reduced. For example, physical bullying has decreased from 63% to 36% and psychological bullying has decreased from 74% to 27%. [The results from the first year pilot group revealed an increase in verbal bullying and a smaller reduction in psychological bullying.]

It is particularly encouraging to note that there has been such a significant decrease in the rate of psychological bullying as this can be more difficult to report, prove and to monitor. The finding that there has been a **decrease** in **all types** of bullying correlates well with the reported **increase** in the children's self-confidence and ability to stand up for themselves discussed in relation to questions 2,3 & 4.



Q. 11 Why do you think you are still being bullied?

Many children said that they “didn’t know”. However, a few children gave reasons:

“because I say the wrong thing and people think I am weird”

“because I am smarter and better at sports”

“because I am now wearing glasses”

“because the school has done nothing about it”

“because I moved school and the people in the new school know people from the old school. The new people hate me because the old people told them rumours”

The above statements certainly support the need for the services of ZAP. They also highlight the fact that bullying takes many different forms and that bullies target **any** perceived ‘weakness’ in the individual to maintain a power imbalance.

At the start of the course, a significant number of parents reported that their child blamed themselves for the bullying. The above statements illustrate this tendency and they also remind us that it is vital that we develop the children’s understanding of the nature of bullying. Once they know and believe that it is the bullies who have the ‘problem’ [for example, low self-esteem, past victim etc], they are empowered and less inclined to feel and behave like a stereotypical ‘victim’.

Q. 12 Has ZAP made you feel more able to deal with bullying?

*Of the **39%** still being bullied, **82%** feel more able to deal with the bullying as a direct result of ZAP*

It is encouraging to note that a significant number of the children who continue to be subjected to bullying approaches report that the ZAP course has helped them to cope.

ZAP IN RELATION TO TRUANCY

Q. 13-15 Have you wanted to or actually stayed off school because of bullying?

*There has been a **34% reduction** in the number of children **WANTING** to stay off school since ZAP. In addition, there has been a **32% reduction** in those **ACTUALLY** truanting. [In contrast, there was a 4% increase in the number of children from the first year pilot group who actually truanted.]*

*Interestingly, the **frequency** of absences has changed with a **25% reduction** in those ‘staying away’ between two and five times, but a **17% increase** in those truanting more than five times.*

It seems reasonable to state that, as a result of the support that the children and their families have received through both the ZAP course, and Kidscape’s helpline, fewer individuals consider truancy as a coping strategy. This assumption is supported by much of the data discussed above, in particular that relating to an increase in the children’s self-confidence, and to their enhanced ability to stand up for themselves.

This is encouraging as it is recognised that once a child is truanting frequently it is very difficult to change this pattern of behaviour. In such cases both child and parent can feel increasingly isolated from the school community and may be unable or unwilling to return. It would be valuable therefore to provide additional support for the children who have truanted more than five times since attending a ZAP session.

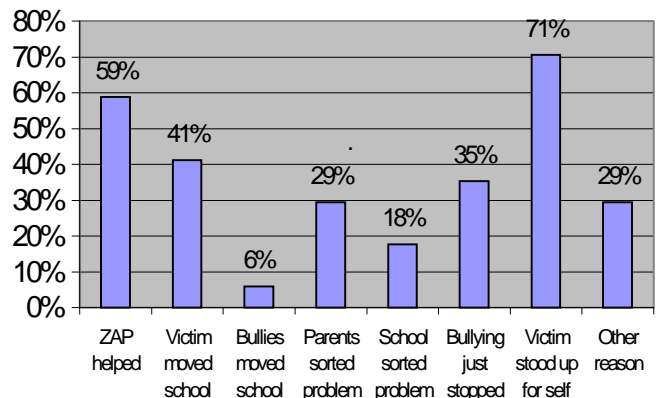
ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Q. 16 Why do you think you are no longer being bullied?

(Note: only children who are no longer being bullied answered this question)

The children were given a choice of seven options as well as the opportunity to state ‘another reason’. The results were very encouraging.

- Approximately three fifths reported that ZAP had helped.
- The majority felt that the bullying had ceased because they were now more able to stand up for themselves



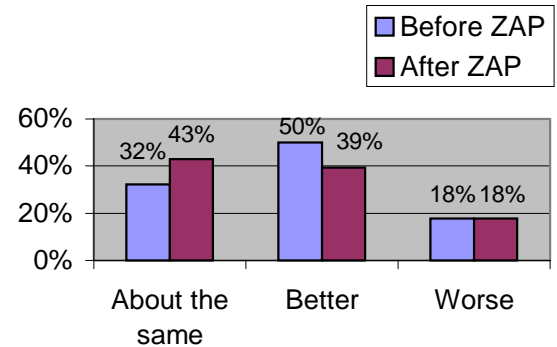
Since assertiveness is a major part of the course, it would seem that ZAP has been of direct benefit to these children.

Note: Questions 17 onwards were answered by ALL children

Q. 17 a) Do you feel you are better or worse than others at schoolwork?

*There is little change in the children's **perceptions** of their academic ability.*

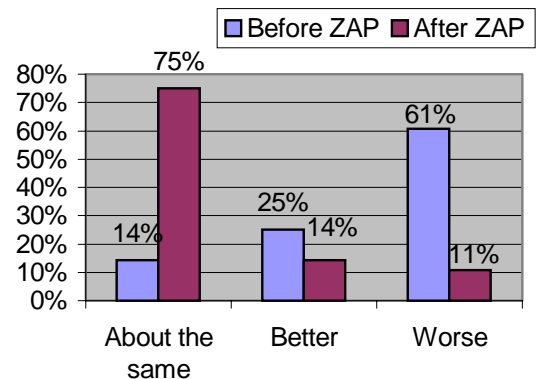
It would be interesting to discover whether the children's **actual** abilities had changed as robust research⁵ findings indicate that an increase in self-confidence helps children to learn more effectively. A study of this aspect of the children's development could be incorporated into future evaluations of the impact of the support provided by Kidscape



Q. 17 b) Do you feel you are better or worse than others at sports?

50% fewer children felt that they were worse than others at sports after ZAP.

It seems reasonable to suppose that for this significant number of children an increase in self-confidence has led them to develop a more positive body-image. They may also be less wary of competing or participating.



Relationships

Questions 18 - 23 were designed to measure the participants' quality of interpersonal relationships. It should be noted that while there is strong supporting evidence to suggest that this is an area that will improve in the long-term, it is difficult to measure or gauge in the short-term. No firm conclusions can be reached concerning the data, which relates to relationships. Certain observations, however, have been made below.

Q. 18 Do you find it easy to make friends?

*48% felt they did **NOT** find it easy to make friends before ZAP. After ZAP, this decreased to **31%**.*

⁵ Lawrence D (1996). Enhancing Self Esteem in the Classroom. (2nd Edition). Paul Chapman

Q. 19-23 How do you get on with...

- **... friends?**
*The number of children who got on 'very badly' with friends **decreased** from **18%** to **4%**. While the number who got on 'quite well' with them **increased** from **32%** to **57%**.*
- **... brothers and sisters?**
A slight deterioration of relationships with siblings was reported after ZAP
- **... other family members?**
*There is a **24% decrease** in the number of children who get on **very well** with other family members, but there is a **24% increase** in those who get on quite well with them.*
- **... other children?**
*There is an increase in the **quality** of children's relationships with other children after ZAP.*
- **... teachers or bosses?**
*There is a **21% increase** in those who get on quite well with teachers/bosses, but there has been a slight **decrease** in the number of those who get on very well with them.*

Learning how to make friends is essential for all children particularly those who have been bullied. While it is very positive to note that there is a decrease in the number of children who have difficulty making friends, a significant proportion reported that they remained undecided or unsure about their ability in this area. The enhancement of friendship skills remains an issue for the future development of the ZAP course.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the children's increased confidence following the ZAP session has made them more assertive, and that they are therefore more willing to test the boundaries of all behaviour and relationships. This is a normal and necessary part of their development and learning, but over the short-term their growing ability to challenge situations can cause 'imbalances' in the family dynamics.

Kidscape's research shows that the **quality of peer relationships** is a key factor in determining the impact of bullying. **21%** of children were getting on 'very badly' or 'badly' with other children before attending the ZAP session. The data points to an **overall improvement** in these relationships after ZAP, but the limitations imposed by the wording of the above questions make it difficult to draw firm conclusions.

SELF-ESTEEM & SELF-WORTH

Q. 24 Have you felt depressed since ZAP?

*There is a **61%** reduction in the number of children who feel depressed about being bullied*

This is a most encouraging finding, especially in the light of the much smaller decrease of **16%** seen in the first year pilot group. The result is consistent with the findings discussed earlier, especially those relating to the very high percentage of children who report an increase in confidence and an enhancement in the way they feel about themselves. This is particularly pleasing because we know that depression is a very damaging effect, which can have long-term consequences.

Q. 25, 26 Have you ever thought about or actually harmed yourself?

*After ZAP **NO** child had self-harmed compared with **14%** pre-ZAP.*

This result is consistent with a significant increase in the feelings of 'well-being' reported by children who have attended a ZAP course. [These are discussed in relation to earlier questions.]

SECTION III – Implications and Conclusions

Implications for Development

Several implications arise from both the feedback we have received, and from the analysis of the questionnaires. While many areas for development are dependent on funding, there are some issues that can be addressed more easily.

The following points are intended to form the basis for discussion:

- **Increase the number of ZAP follow-up sessions** – The ‘Year 1 Report’ pointed to the need for each group to have a follow-up meeting to strengthen support and to enable the young people to share their recent experiences and successes. In the period covering the present report we have arranged such sessions for a few individuals. In the coming months we would aim to extend such opportunities for more in-depth support in relation to specific needs. Topics could include:
 - Friendship skills (verbal & non-verbal communication & relationship skills)
 - Confidence building & assertiveness training in other areas of life
 - Conflict resolution & anger management
- **Amendments to the session agenda and materials** – Feedback from participants indicates that it would be beneficial to move the ‘graffiti wall’ activity to the first break to allow the young people to become acquainted earlier. The ‘This Is Me’ booklet could also be made more ‘user friendly’ by the addition of a contents page, and simply stated aims for each activity.
- **Increase the number of courses per year** – ZAP courses are now promoted on the Kidscape website, and training enquiries as well as applications via the helpline are leading to the need for additional places. There is a particular need to provide places for children below the age of eight.
- **Extend the referral procedure** - The ‘Year 1 Report’ identified the need to reach the most vulnerable children who self-harm or who attempt suicide. It remains our aim to promote ZAP through other channels such as, the Social Services and Family Support Groups. We aim to increase the number of regional (i.e. outside London) ZAP courses in response to the identified needs in a variety of settings.
- **Work more closely with teachers & agencies** - The ‘Year 1 Report’ suggested that if we contacted the teachers of participants it would be easier to ensure that our messages are consistent, and that the children receive continued support and guidance appropriate to their circumstances. As ZAP courses are now delivered in schools and nurseries direct links are being forged between Kidscape and a number of professionals who care for children. Every effort should be made to extend and strengthen such liaison opportunities.
- **Explore young people's wider life** - Future ‘Follow-up Questionnaires’ will ask them about the nature of their friendships **outside** school or work.

Conclusion

The evidence gained from analysing the Questionnaires shows that the children benefited from the ZAP sessions. This is consistent with the findings of the first year pilot group study.

The incidence of bullying was reduced by three fifths. Where bullying continued, the majority of the children who attended ZAP courses were bullied less severely. Most significantly, all the participants felt that they could stand up for themselves more effectively. There was a fall in the number of children who actually stayed away from school as well as a reduction in those wanting to truant. Overall, the children's outlook had improved significantly. During the ZAP day, they became visibly much more self-confident and relaxed.

All of the participants reported that ZAP was useful or very useful. In common with the first year pilot group, the majority felt that they could use the skills they had learnt to appear more confident and to assert themselves when necessary. Similarly the data continues to point to the fact that ZAP contributes to decreased levels of depression. Following ZAP, there were no reported incidences of self-harm.

The feedback from parents and carers has been very positive. Many telephoned or wrote to Kidscape soon after the ZAP session to highlight the ways in which their children had benefited. The following extract from the mother of a bullied child is typical of the comments, which we have received:

"Martin really enjoyed and benefited from this one day course. He no longer feels that his experience at school was his fault and appears to be slightly more assertive in his body language."

Several children in the first year pilot group stated that they would like to come back for further sessions. The young people who attended ZAP courses in the period covered by this report made similar comments:

"Please tell me if there are any other ZAP courses in the summer that I could go to. Thanks!"

Kidscape continues to receive numerous heart-warming and inspiring thank-you letters from parents, carers and teachers.

The children's reactions remain the most powerful evidence of the benefits of the ZAP course. As noted earlier in this report, when the children first arrive on a ZAP day they are generally anxious and withdrawn. By lunchtime the majority have become relaxed and excited. At the end of the session, they greet their parents very positively and talk about their day. Indeed, there are numerous tangible signs that they feel better about themselves and that they are more confident about their ability to cope with bullying.

In conclusion, the findings discussed in Section II of this report provide much support for our original hypothesis:

The type of intervention offered by ZAP can successfully break the negative cycle caused by bullying.

It is important to note that this is a service not provided by any other organisation and it would not be possible without support from:

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