

KIDSCAPE ZAP ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING YEAR 3 REPORT



Period Covered: July 2001 – June 2002
Report Compiled: November 2002

ZAP is Kidscape's tailor-made assertiveness training course for children aged 7 to 16 who have been, or are being bullied. In the period covered by this report, 179 children, mainly from the Greater London area attended ZAP sessions.

Key Findings

- * Bullying was reduced by nearly four-fifths - 79% of participants reported that they were no longer being bullied.
- * Of the young people who are still being bullied, the majority were bullied less.
- * 100% of the children who attended a ZAP session found it to be 'useful' or 'very useful'. 94% felt that they had been helped to stand up for themselves more effectively. 85% reported an increase in self-confidence and 83% identified an improvement in self-esteem. In addition, 19% found it easier to make friends after participating in ZAP.
- * The number of children who truanted was reduced from 50% to 2% while the number who wanted to stay away from school reduced from 31% to 8%.
- * There was a reduction from 92% to 35% in the number of children who reported that they were feeling depressed about being bullied.
- * It is a concern that 4% of the children self harmed after attending a ZAP session although we have to keep in mind that 8% reported doing so before participating in ZAP. In addition it is important to highlight the fact that in contrast to previous years, a high number of participants had complex needs including emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- * 87% of the children reported that they had used the skills that they had learned during the ZAP course, and encouragingly, 44% went on to develop some anti-bullying strategies of their own.
- * Importantly, these findings fully support our original hypothesis:
"The type of intervention offered by ZAP can successfully break the negative cycle caused by bullying."

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SECTION I – Background Information

Introduction

ZAP is Kidscape's tailor-made assertiveness training course for children aged 7 to 16 who have been, or are being bullied.

This report covers year three [July 2001 – June 2002] during which 179 children attended. Year three marks the end of the pilot project and the beginning of regular service provision.

Before assessing year three, it is worthwhile looking back at the findings from the previous two years.

Year 1 and Year 2 Findings

The ZAP course is based on the following hypothesis:

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

A formal evaluation of Kidscape's ZAP course was undertaken on completion of years one and two of the pilot study. This included 'before' and 'after' comparative analysis to determine its impact on those who attended. Most importantly, our evidence supported the original hypothesis by suggesting 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 attempts at self-harm

The key findings from years 1 and 2 were very encouraging. Most notably:

- In *Year 1* bullying was reported to be reduced by two thirds and in *Year 2* it was found to be reduced by three fifths
- In *Year 1* over 80% of the children reported that they felt more confident after having attended a ZAP course. This rose to 100% in *Year 2*.
- In addition, for both years, no children self-harmed after ZAP as opposed to a significant number who reported this behaviour in advance of the session.
- It was particularly encouraging to note that 92% of the *Year 1* and 89% of the *Year 2* participants reported that they had used the skills they had learnt through ZAP
- 64% of the *Year 1* and 54% of the *Year 2* youngsters left the course to develop some anti-bullying strategies of their own.

Implications for Year 3

Several **implications for development** emerged from the evaluation of years 1 and 2 of the pilot project. These have informed the planning of Year 3 ZAP sessions.

Based on our initial pilot group feedback, we adjusted the ZAP course content to build a more holistic perspective. In order to increase the opportunities to “bully-proof” children we have:

- Included additional activities in the ‘All About Me’ booklet, which aims to develop and enhance the participants’ self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Introduced a wider range of climate building activities such as ‘Best Foot Forward’ which help the young people to focus on all the things they like about themselves, things that they enjoy doing, that they are good at or that make them feel happy.
- Actively encouraged the children to become involved in a wider range of activities both inside and outside school.
- Developed sessions for parents. These sessions (PAZAP) aim to equip parents with the knowledge and skills to help and support their children.
- Included practice in relaxation and visualisation.

Following on-going assessments by both participants and Kidscape staff several **additional implications** were addressed:

- Improved focus on self-esteem building, as this is a key issue in school under-performance due to bullying.
- In the second year of ZAP we had introduced follow-up sessions for some participants to provide additional support in relation to specific developmental areas such as anger management and conflict resolution. In year 3, requests for follow-up sessions for the most vulnerable children have continued to increase.

- Requests for one-to-one sessions for children with special needs such as, autism, Asperger's syndrome, dyspraxia and ADHD also continue to rise. During the third year of ZAP we have provided seven sessions tailored to the specific needs of an individual child.
- We have altered the initial application form, to provide information, which enables us to assess special circumstances such as school transfer, special needs, divorce etc. This data allows us to group participants more appropriately. All our group sessions have included children with special, emotional and physical/developmental needs.
- Initial feedback from our third year users led us to design Zap sessions aimed at helping children to cope with the transition from primary to secondary education, when they are particularly vulnerable to bullying.
- We have also continued to run courses in several schools (nursery, primary, secondary, special needs) in various locations throughout the UK including Scotland and Wales.
- 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.

Immediate and Long-term Benefits of ZAP

User feedback points to several immediate and long-term benefits of ZAP. These include children who have been bullied:

- Realising that 'the bully' is the one with the problem
- Learning and using a range of strategies to deal with conflict and cruelty [life skills]
- Communicating hurt and frustration in a supportive yet challenging environment
- Finding solace in peer support as well as forging new friendships
- Developing the confidence to take advantage of the opportunities offered in their school as well as in the wider community.
- Using their skills in real situations and helping others to keep themselves safe

The Impetus Behind ZAP

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

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

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.

Over the past 18 years Kidscape has devised 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. Parents and carers are particularly keen for their children to access courses that will teach their child assertiveness techniques.

ZAP Support

The third 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 Cadbury Schweppes Foundation The Persula Foundation, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, The Mercers' Company, The Goldsmiths' Company and The Toy Trust. To all of these organisations, Kidscape and the families are most grateful.

It is important to note ZAP's pilot project has been so successful, and sessions are in such great demand, that the ZAP's third year marks the beginning of regular service provision.

ZAP Course Objectives

The key objectives of the ZAP course are described in detail in the Year 1 and Year 2 reports. [These documents are available on request from the Kidscape office.]

In essence, the course is grounded in the basic philosophy of human rights. It draws on assertiveness strategies and aims to:

- Explore a range of anti-bullying and assertiveness responses & techniques
- Provide opportunities for pupils to learn and practise these in a safe and supportive environment
- Enhance the participants' confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge
- Protect them from the bullying behaviour and aggressive tactics of others
- Reduce truancy, self-harm, and criminal involvement
- Improve participants' educational attainment/aspirations and interpersonal skills
- Provide ongoing evaluation and support

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

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

Attendance & Selection

It must be stressed that the children attend the course voluntarily. The majority became aware of ZAP as a result of their parents' contact with Kidscape's Helpline and other referrals originate from Social Workers, Doctors & Teachers, Childline and the NSPCC.

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.

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.

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.

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.). Staff members involved in running the sessions are available during the lunch-break to feed back to parents and carers on the response of pupils to the programme.

3) Feedback

The children are asked to complete a course evaluation form at the end of the session.

4) Follow-up Questionnaire

A comprehensive follow-up questionnaire is sent to **all** children within three - six months after the course date. This survey, together with the 'application questionnaire', provides a detailed 'before' & 'after' comparison. [In addition, participants complete a second post-session evaluation within a year of attendance. The Follow – up reports for Years 1 and 2 are available on request.]

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 (Year 3)

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, quiet and withdrawn. Some participants are reluctant to leave the adult who has accompanied them, and appear anxious and tense.

During the period covered by this report the number of children with special needs such as ADHD as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties has increased. These children tend to be quite animated and active from the outset. It seems reasonable to assume that anxiety and stress exacerbate a tendency towards attention-seeking behaviour.

During ZAP

The children are often initially reluctant to participate and to interact with each other. Many avoid eye contact and fiddle nervously with the pens and booklets distributed on arrival.

The sessions are carefully structured to establish a supportive 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 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 both verbal and written feedback we conclude that, the majority of children find the day very rewarding. To varying degrees they enthuse about what they have enjoyed and relate how the activities have helped them to feel more positive about themselves.

A quotation from a 'thank you' letter underlines just how much self-confidence children who have been bullied can gain, as a result of a one-day course:

"Following the training we have already noticed subtle changes in the way our daughter conducts herself. She seems to be valuing herself as a person once more and is already acting more confidently. We are confident that we will see real benefits from the ZAP course during the new school year."

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

"For the first time in ages he walks to school with his head up and a calmness of knowing he can cope with the day in front of him. You have helped to rebuild his self-esteem. You have a wonderful team of people, who through their care and love of children do a brilliant job at helping to get children through what can be one of the toughest time in life, if they are a victim of bullies."

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 and monitoring.

2) Feedback

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

"The ZAP session was really good. It was the first time since the bullying began that I realised it wasn't my fault and I wasn't the only person to be bullied. I found out a lot about myself, most importantly that I could change things. I can be in control and I don't have to put up with it."

Many participants liked the informal atmosphere enhanced by friendly, supportive staff, 'goodie bags' - and not least 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?

94% reported they could now stand up for themselves better

85% reported they are now more confident

83% reported that they felt better about themselves

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. These figures are particularly pleasing in view of the fact that, during the period covered by this report, we worked with a significant number of young people whose mental health had been severely affected by peer-led aggression. It should be noted however that although 94% of the children reported that they could stand up for themselves better, 21% are nevertheless still being bullied.

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

87% have used the skills they learnt during the ZAP session to deal with the bullying:

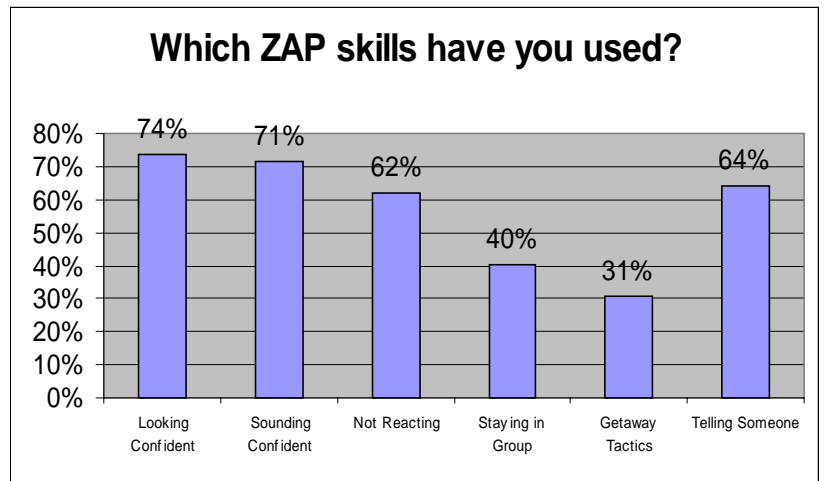
74% try to 'look confident'

71% try to 'sound confident'

62% try 'not reacting'

64% try 'telling 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.



Comments made by participants on the Follow-up Questionnaire give strength to this conclusion:

"ZAP was very helpful. I'm now trying not to throw any nasty words back at the bullies."

[A clear indication that this participant is using the 'fogging technique']

"I am a lot more confident. People don't make fun of me anymore because I have a new appearance."

[An illustration of how raising awareness of the power of body language can help children to avoid difficult situations.]

These examples are very pleasing as one of the concerns often raised about this type of group work, is to what extent the students generalise their learning beyond the boundaries of the group.

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

44% of the children developed some anti-bullying strategies of their own.

THE CHILDREN'S CURRENT SITUATION

Q. 8 Are you still being bullied?

79% 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 21% of children who are still being bullied

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

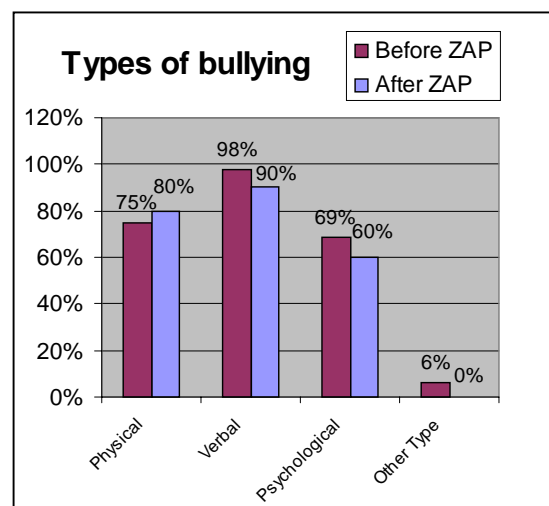
Of those children still being bullied, 80% are being bullied less

We will endeavour to provide the small percentage of those being bullied more with additional support.

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

Most types of bullying have been reduced. For example, verbal bullying has decreased by 8% and psychological bullying has decreased by 9%. The fact that there has been an increase in physical bullying is disappointing, but can perhaps be explained by the fact that a significant number of participants had special needs. A study⁵ by Whitney et al. [1994] in conjunction with the Sheffield Project showed that, this group of children were two or three times more at risk of being bullied. Conditions such as, ADHD and dyspraxia made them a target and they tended to be less well integrated into their class. In addition, some children with emotional/behavioural difficulties acted out in aggressive ways, and were susceptible to becoming provocative victims.

It is particularly encouraging to note that there has been a decrease in the rate of psychological bullying as this can be more difficult to report, prove and monitor. The



⁵ Whitney, I. et al [1994] 'Bullying & Children with Special Educational Needs', in Smith & Sharp [eds.], School Bullying

finding that there has been a **decrease** in **most 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 the bullies are jealous"

"because I am different"

"because there are a lot of bullies in year 6 and they bully lots of children"

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.

A significant number of participants indicated on the Pre-ZAP Questionnaire that they blamed themselves for the bullying. The following statement illustrates this tendency:

"I have come to believe that I am some sort of 'freak' or 'weirdo.'"

Such comments 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'. In addition, we are reminded of the fact that the rebuilding of an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem can be a long and complex process. However, meeting and empathising with a group of individuals who have suffered similar problems and who can provide a future sympathetic network of friends helps to put experiences into a more rational perspective.

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

Of the 21% still being bullied, 90% feel more able to deal with the bullying as a direct result of ZAP.

It is very encouraging to note that the majority 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?

Of the children still being bullied, **60%** reported that after attending a ZAP course they **no longer wanted** to stay away from school because of bullying. Encouragingly **90%** of these young people stated that since ZAP they had **not actually truanted** from school.

It should be noted that the **Pre-ZAP** data shows us that **50%** of the total number of participants stayed away from school because of bullying, and that **after ZAP**, only **2%** did so.

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.

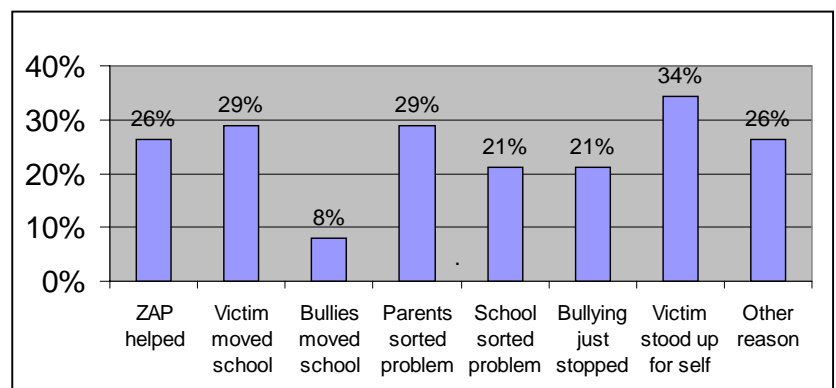
ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

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.

- Over one quarter reported that ZAP had helped.
- One third felt that the bullying had ceased because they were now more able to stand up for themselves.

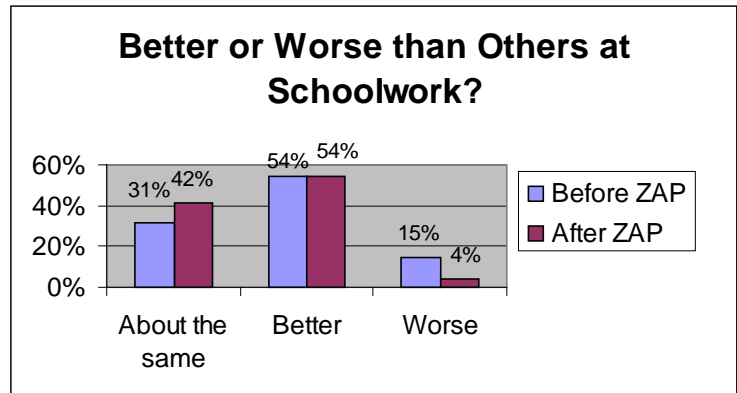


Since assertiveness training is a major part of the course, it would seem that ZAP has been of direct benefit to these children.

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 seems to be an improvement in the children's **perceptions** of their academic ability. The number of participants who believe that they are worse than others at schoolwork has **reduced** from **15%** to **4%**.*

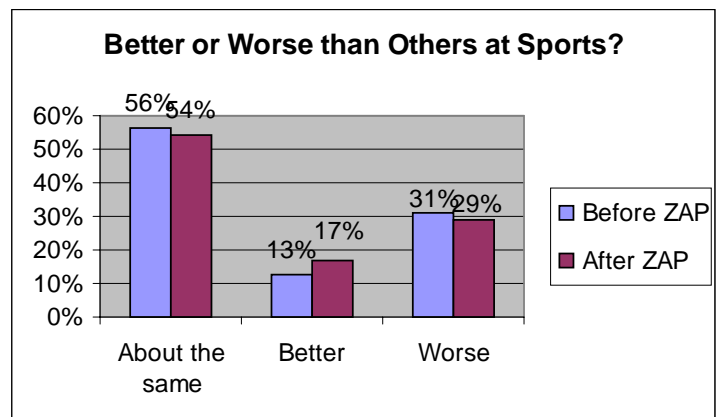


It would be interesting to discover whether the children's **actual** abilities had changed as robust research⁶ findings indicate that an increase in self-confidence helps children to learn more effectively. A study of this aspect of the children's development could be incorporated into future evaluations of the impact of the support provided by Kidscape.

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

17% of the children felt that they were better than others at sports after ZAP.

It seems reasonable to suppose that for some 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 in team events.



Relationships

Questions **18 - 23** were designed to measure the quality of the participants' 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 change in the short-term. No firm conclusions can be reached concerning the data, which relates to relationships.

⁶ Lawrence D (1996). Enhancing Self Esteem in the Classroom. (2nd Edition). Paul Chapman

Notwithstanding, it is worthwhile noting that, **before** ZAP, **27%** of the young people reported that they found it easy to make friends and that **after** ZAP, this number rose to **46%**.

Kidscape's research shows that the **quality of peer relationships** is a key factor in determining the impact of bullying. 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.

SELF - ESTEEM & SELF-WORTH

Q. 24 Have you felt depressed since ZAP?

*There is a reduction from **92%** to **35%** in the number of children who reported that they were feeling depressed about being bullied.*

This encouraging result is consistent with the findings discussed earlier, especially those relating to the 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 consequence of bullying, which can have long-term consequences.

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

*After ZAP **4%** of the participants self-harmed. This compares with **8%** who did so before attending the course.*

It is a concern that for the first time, some children continued to self-harm after attending ZAP. One of the 3rd year objectives was to extend the referral network for participant selection with the aim of identifying and addressing the needs of the most at-risk children in the less fortunate London-area boroughs. Staff actively sought referrals from Social Services and charitable organisations—the response was considerable. There was a noticeable increase in young people with more complex emotional and behavioural needs, and several of these participants are without essential family and/or community support. This factor compounded by their special needs, has implications for both their ability to cope and progress after ZAP.

It is important to remember that for individuals who have been bullied, perhaps quite seriously, there are no miracle cures. This is particularly true for those who have special needs. It is to be hoped that change will come about given additional time and extensive support from both Kidscape and community organisations. This observation underlines the need for follow-up ZAP sessions especially for the most vulnerable participants.

SECTION III – Implications and Conclusions

Implications for Development

Several implications arise from both the feedback we have received, and 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’ and ‘Year 2’ Reports 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 small number of particularly vulnerable 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/interpersonal 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 we need to develop a wider range of age-appropriate climate -building and ice-breaker activities. In addition we need to consolidate our use of both relaxation and visualisation exercises. Some useful changes have been made to the ‘All About Me’ booklet, but this could benefit from the inclusion of the main assertiveness training exercises used in the session.

We have identified the need to provide specific input for students who are transferring from primary to secondary school. This is a time when children feel particularly vulnerable and when they really benefit from being taught ‘bullying-proofing’ techniques. We should aim to develop additional materials to enhance these ‘transfer’ sessions.

- **Extend the referral procedure** – Referrals through the help line and the website allow us to reach 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 have run a number of regional (i.e. outside London) ZAP courses in response to identified needs in a variety of settings. We hope to extend this provision in line with funding constraints.
- **‘Bully Free: Be safe, Be Smart** – This video sponsored by The Lloyds TSB Foundation contains a range of bullying incidents, plus a series of ZAP activities. We are launching this important resource during May 2002. The video is accompanied by comprehensive teaching notes, which should enable parents, teachers and other professionals to deliver their own ZAP session. It is our aim to actively promote these materials in an effort to extend the benefits of ZAP to a

wider audience. We would hope to liaise closely with groups and individuals who are using our materials in this 'distance learning' mode.

Conclusion

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

The incidence of bullying was reduced by nearly four-fifths. Where bullying continued, the majority of the children who attended ZAP courses were bullied less severely. Most significantly, almost 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, relaxed and enthusiastic.

All of the participants reported that ZAP was useful or very useful. In common with the first and second year pilot groups, 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 fewer incidences of self-harm.

The feedback from parents and carers continues to be 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 are typical comments received from the parents of bullied children:

"Coupled with the school change and the ZAP course, she is becoming a different child. We have started to hear her laugh, she is getting so much more confident, and she is getting that mischievous glint back in her eye too."

"Our daughter was really 'buzzing' when she left your offices that day. She felt lighter with her worries, reassured by the fact that other children were in the same situation as herself, felt positive with how to cope with bullies, and her self-esteem was boosted. I also felt that there is light at the end of the tunnel"

Several children in the first year and second pilot groups 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:

"I wish there could be more than one ZAP day!"

Kidscape continues to receive numerous heart-warming, humbling 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, with a visible need to discuss the skills, which they have learned. Indeed, there are numerous tangible signs that they feel better about themselves and that they are more confident about their own ability to resolve or resist their own personal bullying situations.

In conclusion, the findings discussed in Section II of this report are in line with the findings of both the 'Year 1' and 'Year 2' Reports, and therefore, provide additional support for our original hypothesis:

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

The need for ZAP courses continually increases. We have pre-bookings for sessions for secondary transfer pupils six months in advance.

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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