"I'll be happy and smiling all the time"

The impact of safety and relational learning for 9-12-year-old children.

Elaine Dyer
Andrea O'Hagan
Geoff Bridgman
Where’s a good place to bring up children?

Not New Zealand
What’s happening in our schools? Unsafe and unwell?

- The OECD 2015 PISA international surveys show New Zealand educational achievement in science, maths and reading declining against past OECD surveys and in the rank order of more than 50 nations.
- New Zealand has the second highest percentage of school children who are frequently bullied, double the OECD average.
- Our age-standardised rates of admissions to mental health services for 10-14 year olds have risen 63% from 2010 to 2016 and from 8th of 18 five-year age brackets to third, and are rising faster than any other age group (Ministry of Health, 2013, 2014a,b, 2016a,b,c, 2018).
- A NZ programme for 9-12 year-olds created by Elaine Dyer and Andrea O’Hagan
- Teaches safety strategies for responding to family violence and bullying
- Real enough and safe enough to address the issues for children
- Gives children practical and relational strategies to keep themselves safe
- Develops emotional literacy, trust and self agency
- A key resource is the 7-minute Jade Speaks Up video
How is it delivered?

- Whole of school/cohort approach
- Teachers, ancillary, supervisory and external support staff – one day pre-training
- Schools funded for teacher time in training
- Teachers supported by a manual with lesson plans aligned with the Health and Physical Education Curriculum and linked with literacy, social sciences, drama, art, music
- Communication skills, emotional literacy, safety planning, making choices, managing self, good self-talk, respectful relationships
- Taught over a school term or longer
- Teachers given support and supervision during the programme
Who pays?

ACC

$0.74M 3 yrs

Why?

ACC is an insurance company. It pays out $80M/year on assault claims. It hopes to reduce this.

For what?

• Delivery and evaluation of the programme 2017 – 7 schools in Auckland, one Bay of Plenty – 1300 children, 45 teachers – 5 intermediate level, 3 full-primary.
• Experimental and control groups, online pre- post- and follow-up tests (6 months later).
• Assessing child wellbeing, emotional competency, trust, safety attitudes and use of safety skills, value of the programme
• Assessing teacher challenges, programme impact and value, child progress
Headline 1: Significant wellbeing improvement

- Two standardised assessments combined.
- At risk cut-off = 77
- All children completing both pre and post assessment.
- Pacific 34%, Māori 26%, Pākehā 21%, Asian/African 19%,
The teachers’ biggest challenges were addressed.

The biggest challenges – % of children (pre-test) and % of classrooms that improved (post-test)

- Not able to talk about feelings – 50% (87%)
- Don’t know how to keep themselves safe – 38% (90%)
- Not supportive of children struggling to keep up – 37% (69%)
- Not able to ask for help – 36% (71%)
Headline 3: Children more emotionally competent

- Better recognition of emotions
- Less upset by unpleasant events (e.g. being teased, put down)

Headline 4: children’s greater use of safety strategies

Pre-test to post-test to follow-up and Experimental vs control

- Go to a safe place
- Talk to an adult about what happened when you could
- Just breathe and keep calm

- Walk away when that person was there
- Ask a friend to help sort things out
- Call for help
- Talk to the person you are scared of
Figure 5.6: Comparison of post-test and follow-up of teacher assessment of what things have changed over the period of the Jade Speaks Up programme. Data from 8 schools and 25 teachers. 0=about the same, 1=a bit better, 2=much better; *=p<0.05, #=p<0.01.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>% Better</th>
<th>% Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>being often sick</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being regularly disruptive in class</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>having supportive parents/caregivers</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>having a low level of literacy for their age #</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>having indicated non-school issues of concern</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>being supportive of children who are struggling to keep up</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having frequent anger issues ^</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>being able to ask for help</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>being able to talk about their feelings</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>being often bullied</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowing how to keep themselves safe</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average change</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Headline 6: the most vulnerable children did well

- Child Outcome Rating Scale tests helped teachers notice when children were vulnerable – “I wouldn't have known there was any issue at all with this student if it wasn't for JSU, [he] keeps these issues well hidden”.

- Vulnerable children, when noticed, make significant gains in wellbeing (7.3 points on CORS)
Children who were negative or neutral about JSU made the greatest shift from post-test to follow-up.
Where to next?

• 2018: Four new schools in Dunedin, three new schools in Auckland; two repeat schools (one Auckland, one Bay of Plenty).
• Greater focus on full primary schools.
• New models of leadership, streamlined assessment, manual upgrade

• 2019: Ten to 12 repeat schools, one new collective school group outside Auckland
• Training the trainers/facilitators
• Negotiating the funding and structures for a 2020 national roll-out
“I like Jade Speaks Up. Our kids are walking differently, more upright. They are confident and able to talk about what is going on for them. Jade Speaks Up should definitely be supported to continue.” Deputy School Principal

“I’ll be happy and smiling all the time.” Intermediate School Girl