

Evidence Base

Deakin University

“*Speaking Up* is an effective intervention strategy supporting students to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to reduce bullying behaviours.”

Peer Support Australia

Deakin University Study

A pilot study was conducted as part of ongoing post graduate studies to quantify the assumptions regarding the efficacy of *Speaking Up* as a program which reduces bullying behaviours.

Peer Support and Anti-bullying

Since 1997 Peer Support Australia has been providing training, professional development and peer led learning resources to support a whole school approach to reducing bullying behaviours in order to build safe and supportive school environments.

During this time 1250 schools have participated in awareness raising sessions and over 607 schools nationally have implemented Peer Support Australia's anti-bullying programs.

Research

The research focused on 80 students aged 8-12 years in 2 NSW primary schools. One school was an intervention group who had implemented *Speaking Up* the term prior to the research being conducted. The other school did not implement an anti-bullying module, but was conducting the Peer Support Program.

A quantitative questionnaire was used with the participating students.

To summarise, the study of *Speaking Up* provided further evidence that students:

- developed friendships across the year groups
- were more inclusive of others
- developed the skills to support target students
- developed the skills to report bullying behaviours.

Findings

Students in the intervention school had developed friendships across the year groups and it could be said that the anti-bullying intervention module, *Speaking Up*, had created a more positive and harmonious school culture.

Students in the intervention school indicated they were likely to report bullying behaviours to a greater range of people such as a friends, teachers, parents or other adults.

Students in the intervention school witnessed fewer incidents of bullying behaviours approximately three months after the program's conclusion. Awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviours had also been heightened amongst these students.

The intervention school who also participated in a whole school approach to dealing with bullying behaviours demonstrated a willingness to actively engage in reducing bullying behaviours.

Speaking Up was shown to:

- reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour
- change attitudes towards bullying behaviours in the culture of the school
- provide greater awareness of the different types of bullying behaviours
- provide support for the longer term benefits of the intervention program.