

Feeling Good for Schools Key Evaluation Findings 2020-2021

The programme and evaluation were delivered in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, which caused staff/pupil isolations and/or relied on pupils undertaking the programme and surveys at home.

Our external evaluation partner ImpactEd's key findings :

- Participating pupils in the lowest 20% of [wellbeing scores](#) saw a **statistically significant improvement** vs those in the top 80%, which was not the case for the control group (i.e. those in other schools not doing the programme). This pattern was consistent for [resilience measures](#). This suggests that the programme was particularly helpful for pupils with the lowest initial scores in wellbeing and resilience, helping them catch up to those with higher scores.
- Pupils reported learning new skills including understanding their feelings, ways to express them and new ways to cope with challenging situations and feelings.
- **Average** wellbeing and resilience scores showed no statistically significant difference between control and participating schools. Interestingly, the average pupil wellbeing score in our participating schools was higher than the national average pupil wellbeing score.

*“[pupils] who really struggle with anxiety and panic attacks...have found some of the strategies really helpful and a couple of students...told me whatever subject they were in, maths or something and said “I need to use some of the strategies I’ve learnt”. They asked the teacher if they could have a few minutes to use the breathing techniques, for example.” -
Programme Lead 2021*

FPMH's qualitative research key findings:

Interviews with six teachers who led the programme in different schools revealed results that supported the positive impact of the programme, as reported by ImpactEd, our external evaluators.

Impact

- Teachers reported that pupils gained practical and transferable skills for emotional regulation, including an increased self-awareness and understanding of mental health.

“I’ve found that the pupils have been willing to open up and talk about mental health in a positive way and also talk about their worries....talking in quite an articulate way about their thoughts and their feelings and being able to label emotions ...about how to deal with them, those big emotions that often can get out of hand very quick you know”- PSHE lead 2020-2021 .

- The resources were invaluable in facilitating positive impact. The taught sessions provided structure and offered a unique opportunity for self-expression via class discussions. The audio-tracks moved beyond sign-posting to resources but provided direct and practical guidance on skills (e.g. breathing and positive visualisation techniques).
- The teacher is a key element in the successful delivery of the programme and we support this through our teacher training, enabling them to convey the importance of positive mental health practices.

Summary

Despite significant disruptions caused by Covid-19 on both delivery and evaluation of the programme, teachers and pupils alike **reported benefits**, specifically in gaining mental health skills to cope with adversity.

Differing levels of engagement are to be expected with any whole class initiative, however the benefit of providing everyone access to mental health knowledge and skills is substantial. In providing whole class access, the programme is able to develop a general awareness and proactive attitude towards positive mental health practices, and is **beneficial for all pupils**, whilst also reaching the more vulnerable pupils who need it the most without stigmatising or singling pupils out.

Given that 75% of mental illness begins before the age of eighteen, half start by 14 years of age and most are undetected, it is particularly important to have a programme that reaches those who are under the radar. The finding that the programme helped improve scores in those with the lowest wellbeing and resilience is a testament to that approach.

“It’s great that [the programme] can be used for the entire year group and not just targeted students, because a lot of the resources we use in school might just be once a student has been referred...we’ve managed to allow everybody in year 7 and 8 to access this - so that’s a definite plus! - PSHE Teacher

Further information

Watch this short testimonial from a teacher [here](#).

Visit our [Feeling Good](#) and [Foundation for Positive Mental Health](#) websites to read full reports.

To enquire about a Feeling Good for Schools partnership with your school or general enquiries, please contact Rebecca@fpmh.org.uk.