

A process evaluation of a comprehensive school based injury prevention program

Chapman, R., Buckley, L., & Sheehan, M.

A process evaluation enables understanding of critical issues that can inform the improved, ongoing implementation of an intervention program. This study describes the process evaluation of a comprehensive, multi-level injury prevention program for adolescents. The program targets change in injury associated with violence, transport and alcohol risks and incorporates two primary elements: an 8-week, teacher delivered attitude and behaviour change curriculum for Grade 8 students; and a professional development program for teachers on school level methods of protection, focusing on strategies to increase students' connectedness to school.

A comprehensive process evaluation methodology was used, which included assessments of dose, adherence, quality of process, and participant responsiveness with teachers and Grade 8 students at 4 Australian high schools. Program dose, adherence, and quality of teachers' curriculum delivery were assessed through independent observations. The observer also rated the degree to which teachers used connectedness strategies in class, following participation in professional development. Teachers' responsiveness to the professional development element was assessed through surveys immediately following the training, and through focus groups enabling in depth information. Student focus groups also enabled insight into their responsiveness to the program and their perceptions of teachers' use of connectedness strategies.

The results of this research provide an understanding of the application of a process evaluation to a comprehensive injury prevention program and enable insight into the means by which the program may be better implemented to maximise effect and sustainability. The findings also provide insight into the potential value of school connectedness in adolescent injury prevention.