

Can we **ZAP!** you?

ZAP is Kidscape's tailor-made assertiveness training course designed to help children aged 7 to 15 affected by bullying.

A Kidscape survey* has shown that the stress caused to children by bullying could continue into adulthood. In the short-term it leads to feelings of low self-esteem and low self-confidence. Many victims become anxious and withdrawn and may truant to avoid the bullying. At worst, some children may attempt to harm themselves.

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

(See over for more information about how ZAP was assessed.)

Could ZAP help the young people that you work with?

In the past few years we have initiated pro-active projects in schools and other organisations across the UK. We have now secured funding from the DCSF to train professionals in the ZAP methodology so as to enable them to cascade vital skills to colleagues, and most importantly to young people who have been bullied or, as pro-active life-skills training for all pupils. In addition we have secured funding to work with authorities interested in reducing truancy rates at KS3. As noted above, our research shows that implementing this course & giving the 'ZAP' skills to pupils vulnerable to bullying improves their attendance considerably.

What can Kidscape offer you?

- A free place on our *ZAP Unwrapped* course for professionals. This explains & breaks down the component elements of the course to train the trainers.
- Free ZAP related resources.
- The opportunity to attend one of our London-based therapeutic ZAP sessions as a 'participant observer' with an appropriate age group.
- A Kidscape trainer could train a group of professionals in your area and also work with a group of year 7-9 pupils with issues around bullying/attendance.
- Some professionals could attend the pupil session as participant observers.
- If you know of vulnerable pupils who would benefit from our ZAP training programme in London, please ask their parents to apply online at www.kidscape.org.uk

One of our major objectives is to give professionals who work with children the confidence and skills to teach the ZAP strategies to the children they work with. Ideally professionals who have received Kidscape training would offer ZAP sessions to 40+ children in their settings working with group sizes appropriate to their situation.

In return we would require only the completion of individual questionnaires from session participants [professionals and young people] to enable us to monitor the effectiveness of our training.

In relation to the young people who are truanting due to bullying, we would aim to assess the more long-term effect of the ZAP sessions.

How to take part in this project

If you want to take up any of these opportunities or, if you would like additional information, please contact Claude Knights (Director) by email (claudio@kidscape.org.uk) or phone 020 7730 3300

Our website www.kidscape.org.uk also contains much information about ZAP.

We look forward to hearing from you

* *Long-term Effects of Bullying 1995-1997* - available from the Downloads page on www.kidscape.org.uk

How successful is ZAP?

Kidscape decided to monitor the effects of the course to assess how successful it was. The hypothesis put forward was: *The type of intervention offered by ZAP can successfully break the negative cycle caused by bullying.*

To assess the course benefits, Kidscape decided to carry out a "before and after" analysis. Questionnaires were sent to all ZAP participants before their sessions. These were designed to provide key basic information about the child, the nature of the bullying and details of any special needs. 3-6 months after the session, follow-up questionnaires were sent out. These established whether the child was still being bullied, how he or she was coping and generally how things had been since the ZAP session.

In addition to the questionnaires, on the day of the session Kidscape staff noted the children's behaviour and attitude as they arrived, during the day, and as they left the course. How confident were they? How did they interact with other children, with parents and with the Kidscape staff? The children were also asked to complete a course evaluation form at the end of the session.

The following is a representative summary of the findings, yielded by our annual analysis of the follow-up questionnaires:

- 79% of the participants were no longer bullied after ZAP.
- Of those still bullied, 80% were bullied less and 90% felt more able to deal with it.
- 100% of the children found the session very useful or useful. 94% said they could stand up for themselves better. 85% felt more confident and 83% reported an improvement in self-esteem.
- 87% said they'd used the skills learnt during ZAP, and encouragingly 44% went on to develop anti-bullying strategies of their own.
- Truancy was reduced significantly. Only 2% stayed away from school after ZAP compared with 50% before.
- The number of children who reported feeling depressed reduced from 92% to 35%.

Conclusions

The analysis of the questionnaires received since we started delivering ZAP sessions show that the children benefited significantly from their experience.

The feedback from parents and carers also continues to be very positive. Many telephone or write to Kidscape soon after the sessions to highlight the ways in which their children benefited. The following are typical of the comments received:

"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."

The children's reactions remain the most powerful evidence of the benefits of the ZAP course. 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.

In conclusion, the findings gathered from all of our ZAP sessions support our original hypothesis:

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