



2012-2013 IMPLEMENTATION OF COPING POWER IN HWDSB EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



BACKGROUND

In 2012-2013 Coping Power was implemented for the first time in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) in six schools (4 Elementary and 2 Secondary). A total of 89 students (33 in grade 4 to grade 6, 56 in grade 9 to grade 12) participated in the evaluation of HWDSB's implementation of the program and tracking of students' outcomes. The implementation was examined in three ways:

1. Quantitative assessments of student behaviour and emotions (teachers' and students' reports) as measured by the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 2005) which assesses the following five domains: Emotional problems, Conduct problems, Hyperactivity problems, Peer problems and Prosocial behaviour. The SDQ also yields a total problem score which is the sum of scores on emotional, conduct, hyperactivity and peer problems.
2. Students' reports on their perceptions of the program (i.e., what they liked, did not like, etc.)
3. Central office and school-based staff interviews on the implementation of Coping Power (i.e., what worked well, implementation challenges and suggestions for future implementation)

Following is a high-level summary of the evaluation findings. Additional details can be found in the full report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

• SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE DATA ON STUDENT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Students and teachers completed the SDQ before the implementation of the program (October 2012) and at the end (June 2013). Total scores of the five domains of the SDQ were computed separately for teachers and students' reports. Teachers most familiar with students were asked to complete the scale. A comparison group of students not enrolled in Coping Power was sought however it was not possible to establish an adequate comparison group. Findings should be interpreted within this context. The analyses examined change across the five SDQ domains and total behaviour problems score within the Coping Power group only.

Elementary students: (pre and post SDQ data were available only for students)

- Students' scores on the five domains of the SDQ and total problems decreased from pre (October 2012) to post (June 2013). This decrease was statistically significant ($p < .05$) for total problems and marginally significant for emotional problems
- On no domain did students' problems increase after Coping Power
- There were no significant differences between the Universal (program delivered in regular classroom) versus Targeted (program delivered as a pull-out) delivery although there was a trend toward better improvement in students in the Universal group (but not statistically significant)

Secondary students

- With regard to students' and teachers' ratings on the SDQ, there were no statistically significant differences in scores between pre and post Coping Power. However, after Coping Power, scores on peer problems showed a declining trend indicating an improvement in peer conflict which was marginally significant ($p = .05$)
- Students' and teachers' scores correlated more highly (more similar) after Coping Power than at the beginning of the program. One possibility is that students may have become more aware of their emotions and behaviours following Coping Power increasing the validity of their reports.

• **SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COPING POWER**

Students' comments were themed for commonalities. Following is a list of themes that emerged with sample examples.

| WHAT DID YOU LIKE AND LEARN IN COPING POWER? | WHAT DID YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT COPING POWER? | SHARE SOME STORIES ABOUT COPING POWER: |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liked and learned about strategies (e.g., PICC model) • Liked the positive impact of the program (e.g., The program changed me and my attitude) • Liked the activities (e.g., role plays) • Coping Power was an enjoyable experience (e.g., overall good experience) • Receiving praise and prizes (e.g., everyone was praised for good behaviour and could earn prizes) • Being supported (e.g., I felt understood) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not enjoy some activities (e.g., reading, role plays) • Did not like expectations and need for change (e.g., need to change behaviour, sit for a long time) • Did not like other students' behaviour (e.g., some students were too loud and behaviour distracting) • Did not like the difficulty of the program (e.g., a lot of information to learn) • Did not like the lack of confidentiality (e.g., concerned that students would share my problems outside of Coping Power) | <p>Stories about strategies learned: <i>"One day I was walking home. Someone told me that the school I went to was for students who are not smart. I put on my head phones and ignored them"</i></p> <p>Stories about positive impact of Coping Power: <i>"Having Coping Power teachers care about my feelings made me feel a lot more open about my life"</i></p> <p>Stories about the learning that took place in Coping Power: <i>"In Coping Power I learned how to treat people nicer and that I should not expect to get my way all the time"</i></p> |

• **SUMMARY OF CENTRAL OFFICE AND SCHOOL-BASED STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COPING POWER**

| WHAT WENT WELL WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM? | WHAT WERE SOME IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES? | HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION? |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication between central and school-based staff • Good support from central-office staff • Easy to implement curriculum & strategies • Being able to make adaptations and accommodations to the program • Seeing the positive impact of the program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For secondary students, program modifications were a must • Students' generalization of skills was limited • Group dynamics at times were difficult • Large group size was a challenge • Textbooks were a barrier • Some concepts were too abstract • Strike system was not effective while the positive reinforcement system was difficult to implement • Program conflicted with school scheduling and other priorities • Limited budget was a barrier • Increased work load of facilitators and implementation team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase generalization of skills • Allocate time for program and consider it a priority for each school implementing it • Expand program to more students, and to those in younger grades • Provide additional budget • Allocate more staff to decrease facilitators' workload while increasing level of support available |