TACTILE BACK MASSAGE

Works on the motto: "The one you touch, you do not bully", sensitising children via touch. The back massage means that students change their internal personal relationships, as they see themselves in a new role. Both receiver as well as masseur have a positive experience: it's great to get the massage, and it's great to do something good for someone else. Both parties feel that they are important in a process, and they feel valuable, seen and significant in relation to each other. You don't bully a person you've had positive experiences with.

1. INITIATING ORGANIZATION(S), PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Lyshøjskolen in Kolding, Denmark developed the programme together with the Danish Centre for Educational Environment and the people at http://www.taktilrygmsæson.dk/.

2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The method is based on the idea that if you massage someone you do not bully them and on the physiological response that occurs in the body when a person is touched in this way. A crucial element of Tactile Back massage is the activation of the hormone oxytocin. The brain releases the hormone oxytocin which is transported out of the body via the pituitary gland.

Oxytocin causes the body and thus the person to:

- Be calm and relaxed
- Become less aggressive
- Become less anxious
- Be less stressful
- Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- Have less muscle tension

Oxytocin is of great importance for relations between people. A positive bond forms between children who are massaging each other. They come closer to each other, and a potential enemy is under the influence of oxytocin transformed into a close ally. Regular back massage will make a class more harmonious, social interaction will be better.

3. PROGRAM DURATION

No information

4. COMPONENTS AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Purpose: in addition to preventing bullying, the purpose of tactile back massage is:

- That students must learn to give a back massage, as it is experienced as an act of kindness
- That all participants must feel seen and confirmed
- That students stepped in to say yes or no and realizes that the other is listening
- To create body awareness and increase self-esteem
- That pupils experience relaxation while offering enhanced their awareness
- To improve communication and increase tolerance among the students
5. PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

Schools decide if they want to use the programme which is designed for students 5-13. To date, more than 500 schools have used this method to prevent bullying and promoting wellbeing.

6. ASSESSMENT

Qualitative outcomes noted at Lyshøjskolen are as follows:

- The approach changes the relationships among the students and breaks down the difference between students with high and low status.
- The relationship between the boys and girls changes and conflict does not develop as fiercely as before
- Conflicts are forgotten faster and there is more contact among the students
- Students are more concentrated, show less violent behavior, there is less turbulence and noise
- Students are better to take care of each other and enjoy it. It also reduces stress in children and among teachers.

Although the primary purpose of Tactile Back Massage is to prevent bullying, after a few years, Lyshøjskolen noted positive side effects:

- A change in the relationships between students in general, in particular, the relationship between students with high status and students with low status
- The relationship between boys and girls improved. After few years of massage the school no longer deals with the concepts of "girl cooties" and "boy cooties" (cootie, also lurgi = a fictional childhood disease, said to be passed on by touch).
- Music and physical education teachers no longer find that boys and girls do not want to hold hands.
- There is more tolerance and acceptance among the students, and the students have got better at listening and asserting themselves.
- Conflicts do not develop so violently and are quickly forgotten
- More contact among the students, which most clearly seen after school, where more play together
- Students found great well-being in getting massages and indirectly that the massage compensates for lack of care at home.

7. FURTHER READING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

http://dcum.dk/sammen-mod-mobning/taktil-rygmassage