



CASE STUDY

1. Title: Social Norms Approach to Promoting Healthy Schools and Communities

2. Area (Local Authority/School/Setting (if applicable) and Region):
Croydon LA, Healthy Schools Team

3. What was the issue? [100 words max]

As part of the development of its anti-bullying strategy, Croydon LA wanted to counteract the negative stereotype of children and young people that is often portrayed in the media. This would be done by promoting positive messages that most students in Croydon do not engage in bullying and strongly oppose it. The LA administered the on-line social norms survey in 2010 to assess bullying, the results of which could be used to empower students to challenge bullying through school marketing campaigns. Social norms research in America shows that while bullying is substantial, it is not the norm. The most common misperception is that the majority of students engage in and support bullying behaviour when, in fact, most students hold strong opinions against bullying behaviour.

4. What action was taken? [100 words max]

An anonymous on-line survey was conducted to assess bullying in eight primary and four secondary schools in Croydon. Total number of participants was 2286. Results revealed that students consistently overestimated the extent to which they thought other students had been victimised or perpetrated bullying behaviours during the past 30 days. For example, while 87 per cent of students said that they had not spread unkind rumours or stories about another student, conversely they also thought that 52 per cent of most other students had done this to another student. In other words, students thought their peers had engaged in these behaviours more often than was actually the case! Using the data, participating schools were able to identify the social norms amongst their student population, schools then picked a key message to promote through advertising campaigns rolled out across the school at the start of Anti-Bullying Week 2010. Activities included teaser campaigns, posters, screensavers, assemblies and flash-mobs.

5. What impact has this had (so far)? [100 words max]

The process of social norms has had an impact on schools; the amount of data collected has given schools and the Local Authority a comprehensive understanding of children and young peoples' experiences of bullying. Schools and the Local Authority used the data to target key issues in their locality. Groups of pupils created advertising teams to devise a message for their school. The focus was to provide information on the behavioural norms (what happens to me) and as against the perceived norms (what I believe happens to others). As well as where bullying happens e.g. physical bullying in the playground (42%) or classroom (16%), the data also revealed the link between bullying and attendance with 9% of pupils reporting they had skipped school because of

bullying once compared with 3% who had skipped school because they had been bullied 4 or more times.

Schools have designed advertising campaigns to inform their communities of positive messages in their schools. Examples of messages attached.

6. How did the above action help to embed anti-bullying work in your area?

The social norms campaign provided an evidence base to inform schools and services about issues of bullying. The data has been shared with other local services to provide a greater understanding of bullying and how social norms campaigns can be used to address other Croydon priorities. The 12 schools created a lot of interest with pupils, staff and parents in launching their Anti-Bullying Week messages. The success of Anti-Bullying Week has meant the schools will be running on-going campaigns over the academic year in effect creating an Anti-Bullying Year!

7. Additional information (OPTIONAL):

Do you have any images/ documents/ websites (including LA/school websites if relevant) to help illustrate this case study? *If yes, please attach document or paste website address.*

American websites on research on social norms:

<http://alcohol.hws.edu/index.html>, or <http://www.youthhealthsafety.org/>

Contact details of author (OPTIONAL): [Name], [Email], [Phone]

Luke Roberts, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, Croydon LA,

Luke.Roberts@croydon.gov.uk, 020 8726 5431