



## Research Article

# Feasibility study of Learning Together for Mental Health: fidelity, reach and acceptability of a whole-school intervention aiming to promote health and wellbeing in secondary schools

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## Plain language summary

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Despite mental health problems being common among young people, there are few effective interventions provided in schools to address this that go beyond teaching about mental health in lessons. The most effective school-based programmes work to improve mental health via multiple mechanisms at multiple levels. These approaches are called 'whole-school' interventions and include many components. They offer a practical and sustainable way of promoting mental health. We previously evaluated an intervention called 'Learning Together'. We found that it reduced bullying, improved student well-being and mental health, reduced substance use and improved General Certificate of Secondary Education results. We adapted Learning Together to develop Learning Together for Mental Health, which focuses more explicitly on improving mental health and well-being. The Learning Together for Mental Health programme provides a report for schools on well-being and school experiences of students. It also enables schools to form 'action groups', comprising students and staff who worked together to review this report and plan how the school should respond and best support well-being. Teachers are also trained to use restorative practice to improve relationships in school and to address bullying, misbehaviour or conflict. Restorative practice responds to incidents by identifying harms, ensuring perpetrators take responsibility and improving the relationship of those involved. And schools delivered lessons aiming to promote students' social and emotional resilience skills. This paper reports on how well the new intervention was delivered in four secondary schools in southern England and whether it reached students and was popular with staff. We used surveys with staff and students, and logbooks completed by staff to assess this. We found the intervention was delivered well and was popular with staff. Two schools only delivered half or less of the curriculum. Over a third of students were aware of the intervention. With some refinements, Learning Together for Mental Health is ready to be evaluated in a larger study to assess its effectiveness.