



Responding to disruptive behaviour in schools: Collaboration and capacity building for early intervention

Vicki Cowling¹, Jan Costin², Rosie Davidson-Tuck³, Jill Esler⁴,
Anne Chapman⁵ and Judith Niessen⁶

1. Mental Health Promotion Officer, Eastern Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Box Hill, Victoria, Australia
2. Senior Psychologist, Eastern Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Ringwood East, Victoria, Australia
3. School Focused Youth Service Coordinator, City of Knox, Wantirna, Victoria, Australia
4. School Guidance Officer, Department of Education and Training, Ferntree Gully College, Victoria, Australia
5. Children's Resource and Development Officer, City of Knox, Wantirna, Victoria, Australia
6. Psychologist, Eastern Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Maroondah Hospital, Victoria, Australia

Abstract

The Disruptive Behaviours project was a partnership between a child and adolescent mental health service, local government school focused youth service, and the education sector, and provided educational material for teachers and families concerning the aetiology and management of disruptive behaviours. Each partner in the project shared the perception that children and adolescents with disruptive behaviour disorders were often misunderstood and a source of stress to those with whom they came into contact. This paper describes an innovative response to increasing understanding and enhancing effective responses in school settings towards these young people. The project provided professional education seminars for primary and secondary schools, and a resource book was prepared and given to schools. Written material was prepared for families both at primary and secondary schools. As the project developed, a shared understanding of the issues evolved in the partnership. The project demonstrates the positive outcomes for schools and agencies of multisystemic collaboration.

Keywords

Disruptive behaviours, professional partnerships, capacity building, early intervention, mental health literacy

Contact: Vicki Cowling, Statewide Coordinator, Children of Parents with Mental Illness, CAMHSNET, Hunter New England Area Health Service, Locked Bag 1, HRMC, NSW, 2310 Vicki.Cowling@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au (since December 2004)

Citation: Cowling, V., Costin, J., Davidson-Tuck, R., Esler, J., Chapman, A. & Niessen, J. (2005). Responding to disruptive behaviour in schools: Collaboration and capacity building for early intervention. *Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health* 4(3) www.auseinet.com/journal/vol4iss3/cowling.pdf

Published by: Australian Network for Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health (Auseinet) – www.auseinet.com/journal
Received 27 October 2004; Revised 7 November 2005, Accepted 27 November 2005