

Flinders University Evaluation

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The LifeChanger program was independently evaluated by Flinders University using both quantitative and qualitative data from students, mentors, and educators. The evaluation involved five schools from three states with varying socio-economic backgrounds and school types.

The program is effective in achieving its goal of empowering young people to reach their full potential



"It is remarkable that there was a statistically significant increase in student resilience post-program, given that the LifeChanger program sought to facilitate change in a variety of student domains, not just resilience."

Key Findings

The LifeChanger program was found to have a positive effect on students' self-development with results showing **an improvement in students' health, optimism, self-awareness, and resilience, as well as stronger connections with peers and the community.**

Students also reported:

- Increased resilience
- Improved stress management
- Increased confidence in the face of adversity
- Developed capacity to think under pressure
- Improved positive self-image
- Increased self-awareness
- Increased sense of optimism
- Increased participation in outside activities

76%

better understood their feelings

64%

positively shifted their sense of optimism

58%

increased their participation in outside activities

55%

incorporated strategies to ease stress

"The symbiotic interaction of LifeChanger program participants, facilitators and mentors enhances foundations for safe and resilient communities."

COMMENTS

"It was a very positive work environment. There was no stress on you that you had to do this, you had to do that. It was just a learning opportunity where you could have fun with your friends, and it wasn't just stressful and everything. And I think that definitely had a very positive impact on all of us." - Youth Participant

"I was absolutely blown away by their [students] vulnerability, their willingness to talk – I kind of expected more hesitancy, more guardedness, and of course, there were young people in the room that was their presentation, but their willingness to get up and dance and be vulnerable in front of each other and be silly, their willingness to talk about some of the stuff, I was really impressed with them and surprised ... So I think a lot of it was down to the facilitators creating that space." - Mentor

"LifeChanger were really good at pointing out kids that they thought too might be struggling or that they'd picked up, so they'd actually picked this picture up and informed me of that. That was really good too, insightful ... [this] child protection case was quite significant ... We were able to jump on pretty quickly and put support in place for him and the family. That would've taken us probably months to be able to get to. We wouldn't have picked that up at all." - Educator

Recommendations

The LifeChanger program should continue to be implemented for students at schools, with a focus on:

- Keeping vibrant and enthusiastic facilitators
- Expanding the program to 8 sessions
- Prior to beginning the program at a school, inquiries should be made about students with disabilities so that they can be accommodated accordingly
- Modifying resources to support differentiated student learning and to assist students in integrating the Five Pillars
- Maintaining strong relationships with schools and involving teachers in the sessions to assist in keeping students on task (in a non-disciplinary way)
- Schools reinforcing LifeChanger messages on a regular basis

CONCLUSION

Evidence shows that the LifeChanger program advances the process of maximising young people's potential by providing the necessary resources to improve their personal skills, mindset, and self-belief. Participants reported improvements in health, optimism, resilience, and self-awareness, as well as stronger connections with peers and the broader community.

The program is effective in achieving its goal of empowering young people to reach their full potential. It should continue to be implemented in schools as it is a valuable and beneficial program for adolescent self-development.

FEEDBACK FROM DR GRACE SKRZYPIEC

Senior Lecturer, Flinders University

"Based on the empirical evidence, I highly recommend that schools consider implementing the LifeChanger program for their students."

Key Findings:

- LifeChanger is a multi-component positive psychology intervention (PPI). With research showing that multi-component PPIs are the most effective interventions for the promotion of mental health and well-being.
- Empirical evidence shows that the LifeChanger program is a very worthwhile intervention for young people entering adolescence. The program positively contributes to student development during one of the most challenging times of their lives.
- The effectiveness of the LifeChanger program is supported by statistical evidence where statistical analysis found significant changes in student well-being following their involvement in the program. These findings were not due to chance!

Meaningful Changes:

- Over half of the students who rarely or never used strategies to reduce stress (particularly box-breathing) reported they were using these strategies after the intervention.
- More than half the students who participated in the program improved their resilience scores.
- Over 60% of students had increased optimism following the intervention.
- More than three-quarters of the students who indicated they did not understand their feelings before the program said that they understood their feelings well following the program.
- Over half of the students who did not know their strengths prior to the program increased their awareness of their strengths after the program.

"Connections with peers and teachers were significantly improved for those involved in the program. LifeChanger also helped students see that they were not alone in their feelings. Together these two factors would have the effect of decreasing students' sense of being different and so would reduce the risk of radicalisation."