

PEER SKILLS

www.peerskills.com.au

“I got here in Year 8 and knew no-one. Peer Skills helped me make friends – it was the best thing.”

“There is a strong argument (based on the evidence) for a peer program to be present in every school as part of a multi-faceted, whole of school vision for the safety, well-being and personal growth of pupils.”

— McGrath & Noble, 2010





To contact Peer Skills go to:
<https://ucommunity.org.au/peer-skills>
email: peer.skills@ucommunity.org.au

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Did you know that in Australia young people are said to “carry the greatest burden of mental illness?”, that suicide is the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24 years and that one in four Year 4 to 9 students are bullied every few weeks or more in Australia? (Kids Helpline)

Schools work hard to provide mental health and wellbeing supports to their students and our communities expect a lot from them. UnitingCare Lifeline’s Peer Skills program is a peer support program first developed by Kids Helpline that has for over 20 years provided training and resources to help Australian primary and secondary schools support the wellbeing of students.

The evidence tells us that a peer support approach is effective in addressing a range of issues including bullying and mental health concerns.

- Peers relationships are important for the healthy psychological development of young people.
- Young people have influence over other young people.
- Young people prefer the informal help of friends and family and are most likely to seek support from people they have a close, trusting relationship with.

The Peer Skills Workshop, run over two school days, improves coping and relationships skills so that young people can better deal with everyday and serious issues. With training, young people can significantly increase their confidence in their ability to provide help and to access help, either for themselves or others.

THE BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS

Staff trained in Peer Skills gain the skills and knowledge to effectively facilitate Peer Skills Workshops and implement a peer support program. Schools that implement Peer Skills find that the program:

- helps develop respectful relationships – a priority for learning and wellbeing.
- contributes to a positive school culture - students feel safe, secure and belong.
- helps prevent problems - issues are responded to before they escalate into more serious concerns.
- reduces stigma – increases students accessing support for a range of concerns.

