

IRC Funded Bystander Intervention Secondary School Pilot
2022-2023

Impact Report



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Introduction

Dear Second Level Colleagues,

The Bystander Intervention Second Level Programme has been hugely successful, and we wish to encourage delivery for this academic year and take the opportunity to present you with the research on the impact of the first year of the programme. The evidence-based transformational learning and impact of the programme reflects the commitment and skilled facilitation of the programme by you and your colleagues working in Second Level education.

The Irish Research Council second level programme was launched in March 2022.

Our impact data indicates a very real capacity for cultural change with an awakening of individual and collective capacity, to recognise and challenge unacceptable behaviour, and to demand and effect a better, more respectful experience for all.

Staff from 50 schools nationally undertook training from March to November 2022. 3-hour online training sessions were delivered to 170 teachers in workshops of 10-12 teachers.

Programme Delivery 23/24

As educators we are incredibly encouraged by the positive learning and teaching experience of participating schools.

Delivery of the Pilot Programme for 2023/24

Schools who participated in the pilot have been trained on delivery of the programme and are encouraged to deliver the training again this year.

The Bystander Programme takes a trauma-informed approach, with phased delivery over a series of workshops.

The following documentation must be completed when delivering the programme:

Prior to commencement;

- Provide parents and students with the information sheet
- Parents to sign consent form
- Students to sign assent form
- Students complete pre-training questionnaire (same QR code as last year.)

Upon completion;

- Students complete post training questionnaire (same QR code as last year.)

Evolution of the Second Level Programme

Following analysis and stakeholder feedback from the pilot programme, the content has evolved and the updated training will be available in November 2023 with an added focus on the Night Time Economy.

Participant research questions and feedback from staff focus groups have informed the updated programme to further reflect the experiences of adolescents when engaging in social activity with their peers.

Schools who are currently on our waiting list for training and school staff who underwent training last year but wish to avail of the updated programme can avail of the updated version.

We will keep you updated on the next phase of training, we expect this to take place towards the end of 2023.

Queries can be directed to bystander@ucc.ie

Student Reflections



Students from Christian Brothers School, Cork highlighted their key learnings through artwork



Share your students reflection work

Anonymise your students artwork / poems / reflections and share with us:
Email bystander@ucc.ie

IRC Bystander Intervention Research Data

Quantitative and qualitative research data was gathered from the participating students, through pre and post programme questionnaires. Analysis of the data illustrates an increased capacity to identify acts of sexual harassment and an enhanced willingness to speak up to support others, demonstrating the extent of student learning and the immensely positive impact of the training.

Upon completion of training students feel more capable and willing to participate as pro-active bystanders, illustrating the positive impact of this programme in empowering young people who witness this behaviour within their peer group to respond in a safe way.

Bystander Intervention to address issues of sexual harassment and violence for Irish adolescents

Young people must be able to navigate their sexual development, and feel safe in their study, work, home environments, as well as in the greater community. The RCNI groundbreaking 2021 study of experiences of sexual harassment found alarmingly that;

- **83%** had witnessed some form of sexual harassment
- **78%** adolescent participants said that sexual harassment occurred within their peer community (RCNI, 2021)

It is very encouraging that Irish adolescents exercised their voice in this research and indicated that to address this issue, a ‘whole school approach’ is required where peer groups work together to identify and report issues, parents are aware of the significance of this training, and schools must discipline appropriately.

- **23%** felt sexual harassment within school is common, often overlooked or not adequately disciplined by school authorities.
- **81%** felt that, with the support of their peer group, they had the power to address sexual harassment (RCNI, 2021)

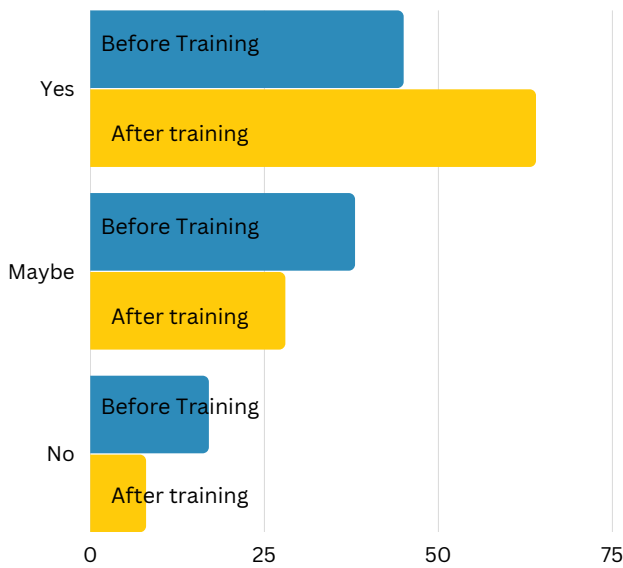
RCNI (2021) Storm and Stress’. An exploration of Sexual Harassment Amongst Adolescents.

Empowering young people to be pro-social bystanders

64%

On completion of the training students said they had the capacity to intervene if they witnessed or heard unacceptable behaviour

I have a good ability to intervene if I witness or hear unacceptable behaviour

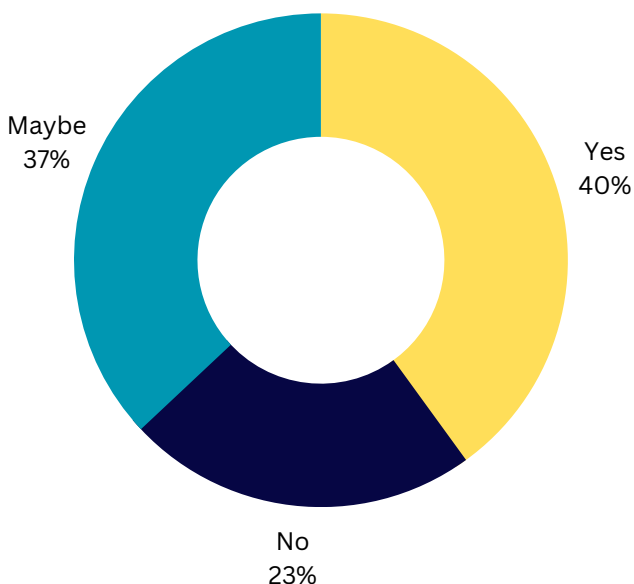


Most pupils believed this statement upon completion of the programme with an increase from 45% to 64% agreeing with this statement.

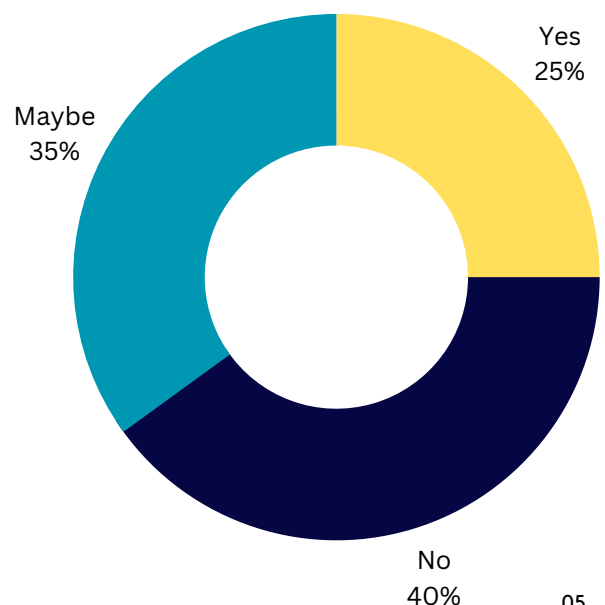
This is an increase of 19%

Upon completion of the programme, less students agreed that there is little they can do about sexual harassment and violence amongst their age group

Pre-Commencement Questionnaire

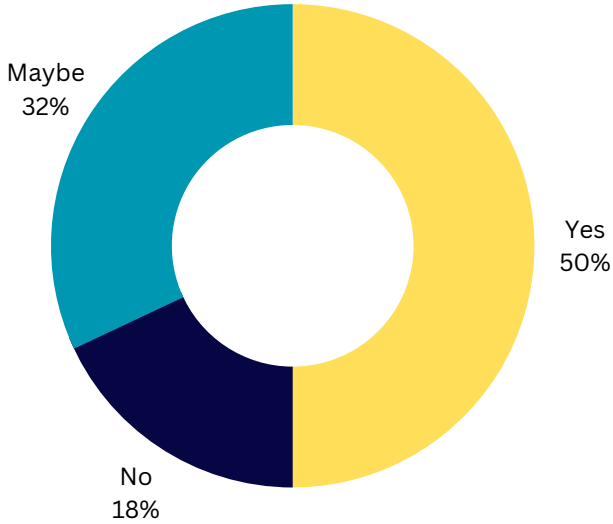


Post-Completion Questionnaire

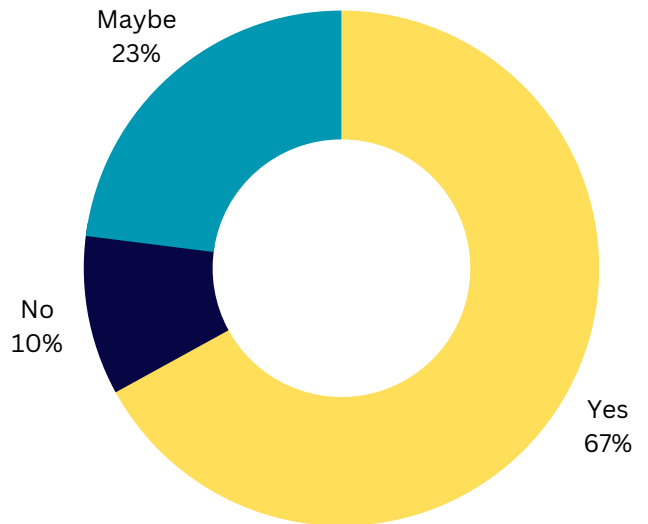


Upon completion of the programme, more students agreed that sexual harassment is a problem in their age group

Pre-Commencement Questionnaire



Post-Completion Questionnaire



Students feelings upon completion of the programme



Staff focus groups

“We are doing young people a dis-service if graduating from school without it”

“Enjoyed spontaneous feedback from students: enriched the discussion”

“Proactive, engaging and practical”

“User friendly: easy to navigate by teachers and students”

“Rewarding experience, students engaged well with content”

“Amazing resources, ready to use and well organised”

“Students engaged best with practical tasks: walking debate/discussion”

“More staff want to be trained to deliver content”

“Students found the content excellent”

“Students are disappointed to miss out on training if they have to attend a match”

“The content is long overdue”

“Students were not aware that consent is reversible”

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- Positive feedback given overall: staff acutely aware of issues and harms young people are experiencing and were very enthusiastic about delivering the programme.
 - Found course content to be age-appropriate and interactive with students, enabled discussion and peer learning through group work.
 - Training and support materials provided valuable.

Acknowledgements

We greatly acknowledge the contribution of the **Irish Research Council** in funding this pilot programme

Thank you to all **school staff** who delivered and facilitated the programme so well to students during the 2022/23 academic year.

Further information on the second level programme can be found in the attached copy of our submission to the Second Level Leader Magazine (Aug 2023).

Looking forward to working with you all again this coming year.
Louise, Céline and the Bystander Team



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We thank you for your continued support for our programmes.