

Research shows benefits of investing in psychological wealth of young people

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Professor Michael E. Bernard from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education has just released the results of a study examining the impact of You Can Do It! Education on the well-being of students across six Victorian primary schools.

“Just as with physical health, prevention is better than cure for emotional health issues too. I encourage schools to teach [students](#) that money doesn’t buy happiness; instead, happiness comes from nurturing our inner qualities, or our ‘psychological wealth’” said Professor Bernard.

“We found when students are explicitly taught how to be confident, persistent, organised, resilient and to get along with others, and when this teaching is integrated through classroom and school-wide practices, students become more self-managing of their emotions and behavior.

“When students feel more in charge of their emotions, they are better able to stay calm in the face of the many stresses they encounter growing up in today’s world,” said Professor Bernard.

According to Professor Bernard, teaching social-emotional competence is just as important as teaching academic competence, and schools that do so are more likely to be able to deal with issues like bullying when they arise.

“When we invest in helping students become self-accepting in the face of the inevitable mini and major crises, they learn to stop taking

criticism or difficulties in schoolwork personally. We can inoculate them against stress much in the same way as a vaccine wards off disease,” said Professor Bernard.

The You Can Do It! Education program, designed by Professor Bernard, is already used in thousands of schools throughout Australia. For this study it was introduced to schools through a train-the-trainer model.

“I’m really encouraged by the success of the low-cost train-the-trainer approach used in this study,” Professor Bernard said. “It indicates that school-based well-being programs that incorporate positive psychology programs can realistically be made available to all schools – they just need enthusiasm and dedication to implement them.”

Provided by University of Melbourne

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