



FRIENDS			
Setting and Target Group	Approach	Focus	Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary schools: students aged 7-11 years • Secondary schools: students aged 12-16 years. • Adapted materials available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse students • Parents (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom based skills training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal prevention program • Can also be delivered as an indicated intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials available, for purchase by schools. • One day training packages available for purchase, throughout Australia.

Developed by Professor Paula Barrett, Adjunct Professor at the School of Education (University of Queensland) and Director of the Pathways Health and Research Centre. The FRIENDS program has evolved from Dr. Barrett's 'Coping Koala' anxiety treatment protocol.

Description

FRIENDS is a universal prevention program which aims to reduce the incidence of serious psychological disorders or emotional distress by teaching young people how to cope with anxiety, both now and in later life. It is delivered as a classroom based skills development program for all students in particular grades.

The program can also be delivered as an indicated intervention with students identified as being at-risk of developing mental health problems.

FRIENDS is based on cognitive behavioural principles and the building of emotional resilience. The program aims to support protective factors such as

- self-esteem
- problem-solving
- self-expression, and
- positive relationships with peers and adults.

Program materials and concepts are available in an adapted format to suit the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people.

Optional parent information sessions can be delivered by the classroom teacher.

Process

As a universal prevention program: the school adds the program to the relevant year level curriculum. Specific class teachers are given a 1-day group-training session provided by an accredited FRIENDS trainer.

This program is designed to be run by teachers in normal class times. The complete course consists of 10 participant sessions with 2 booster sessions to be delivered as a follow up. There are also 2 optional parent sessions.

Senior guidance personnel within the school community may use the FRIENDS for Life program as an intervention or treatment protocol for work with selected at-risk students.



Mental Health Promotion and Illness Prevention in School Settings

Access

Information about training availability and resource costs can be located at:
<http://www.friendsinfo.net/TRAINING.html>

The FRIENDS program is available to any school that wishes to purchase the materials and training. This involves a one-off cost (for the teacher manual and training), with individual workbooks purchased by all students subsequently involved in the program.

Training courses are regularly conducted by the Pathways Health and Research Centre in major cities throughout Australia.

Evaluation

FRIENDS is acknowledged by the World Health Organization for its comprehensive validation and assessment across several countries and languages, using rigorous randomised control studies.

The research states that up to 80% of children showing signs of an anxiety disorder no longer display that disorder after completing the program. This effect has been confirmed at up to 6 years post treatment. (*Evidence Base Abstracts p.2 – refer below*)

Primary school children reported the greatest changes in anxiety symptoms, suggesting earlier preventive intervention was potentially more advantageous than later intervention. (*Evidence Base Abstracts p.6*)

More information about evaluation can be found in 'Evidence Base Abstracts' (updated May 07) available online at <http://www.friendsinfo.net/downloads/FRIENDSAbstractsBooklet.pdf>

Website

<http://www.friendsinfo.net/friendsinschools.html>

Contains:

- detailed descriptions of program
- learning outcomes
- evidence base
- training calendars, and
- ordering/booking information.

Contact

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