

Facts4Life Pain Management study

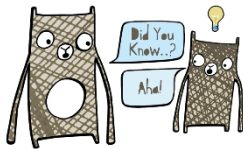
Introduction

In April 2025, Facts4Life received a grant from the University of Gloucestershire to carry out a research project to investigate whether education can reduce the impact of chronic pain.

Facts4Life also collaborated with Gloucestershire Hospitals' Chronic Pain Department, Teesside University and the Royal College of Anaesthetists to incorporate their clinical and research expertise.

Aim

The project was designed to provide education for primary and secondary age children to understand the nature of pain and how pain can often be managed without the need for medical intervention.



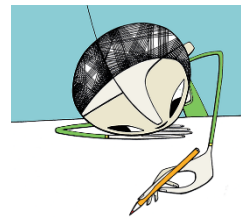
Objectives

- Develop an easily accessible pain education and management module for children
- Train teachers to deliver the module
- Trial the module in three primary schools and one secondary school
- Assess the impact on children's and teacher's attitudes to pain as a result of the intervention

Methodology

Four schools took part in the pilot study. School A is a secondary school and schools B, C, D are primary schools.

The Facts4Life team provided a half day training session where teachers and TAs from the intervention schools were introduced to the three key messages of the Facts4Life curriculum and the 6 key concepts that underpin the pain modules. Evaluation of the training showed high levels of satisfaction with the material and confidence in being able to introduce in the classroom.



- School A - modules were taught within a PSHE lesson over a 3-week period to one group of Year 7 students. They were also taught to a Year 7 science class in consecutive lessons within one week.
- School B - modules were taught to a Year 5 class within PSHE over a 3-week period.
- School C - modules were taught to a mixed group of Year 4, 5 and 6 children over a 3-week period
- School D - the teacher delivered Facts4Life core modules on managing illness to a Year 5 class and did not use the pain modules.

In all cases, children on the SEN register were taught within the whole class with TA support rather than as a separate nurture group.

A member of the Facts4Life team carried out a before and after COPI survey to measure the children's understanding and attitudes towards pain and 104 students completed both surveys. The COPI survey was developed to evaluate the effectiveness of pain science education.

Key findings

Teachers reported that the children had engaged well with the resources. They also felt the module added value to the curriculum and benefitted all students including more vulnerable children.

When comparing the pre and post training surveys, the scores increased across the board for every question. The most noticeable increase in average score was in response to the statement 'Learning about pain can help you to feel less pain'. This is extremely

"The children are confident and have learned skills they can use in their own lives"

encouraging, pointing to an appreciation that training and learning is positive in this area.

The survey results were also broken down by subsets of different age groups, frequency of lessons and whether they had additional needs to establish if these elements played a part in the impact of the module. Reassuringly, the increase in survey scores was broadly the same across all subsets, indicating that the content was pitched at the right level and a similar impact had been achieved across the board, including the SEN subset.

The results for School D, who had not been taught the pain module, showed a much smaller increase in survey results with many of the individual questions showing no improvement or a decrease in average score. This underlines the impact of the tailored pain management resources.

"I'm really proud of the children and how much they were able to explain about what they had learned."

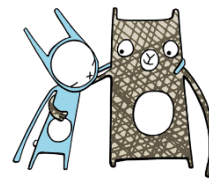
Key insights

The resources were praised for being easy to deliver, relatable and interactive. The use of videos particularly engaged the children and became conversation starters, encouraging discussions about their own experiences.

"The resources were really good and interactive."

Some of the teachers felt the length of two of the modules could be changed and that some extension activities would be beneficial if a class had understood the concept more quickly. One of the videos was felt to be a more difficult concept for primary aged children to understand.

Teachers observed greater resilience in some children and a stronger relationship with them, potentially as a result of having shared experiences and being able to talk to them about the topic.



Others felt that it had brought their PHSE and Science curriculum together.

Conclusions

The results of this small pilot study indicate that the Facts4Life pain modules have a positive impact on primary and secondary children's understanding of pain and their view that learning about pain can help in its management.

The results are promising, particularly when compared with the results of the unintended control group and suggest that a full independent study involving a larger sample of children would be worthwhile.

Any school interested in taking part in the study is encouraged to email:

info@facts4life.org.