

ENHANCING PHYSICAL Activity Promotion In Upper Secondary Schools: Nationwide Dissemination And Implementation Of Evidence-based Intervention Strategies



Elina Renko, Elisa Kaaja, Nelli Hankonen – Social Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki

OBJECTIVES AND BACKGROUND

Youth are insufficiently active for their mental and physical health. Schools provide an excellent opportunity for fostering motivation and skills for physically active lifestyle. Health promotion usually underutilizes behavioural scientific understanding on sustained, intrinsic motivation and behaviour change. **This key project further developed and disseminated research-based strategies to increase physical activity and reduce excessive sedentary behaviours**, by adapting effective elements of a theory- and evidence-based Let's Move It (LMI) school-based program, and disseminated these to Finnish upper secondary schools. Large network of key stakeholders informed and supported the project.

The focus of this project was unique in the Finnish health promotion (research) setting: we comprehensively carried out and investigated the training and uptake of motivational interaction strategies, along with other behaviour change facilitation skills, among practitioners.

RESEARCH UTILIZATION

We piloted, developed and conducted two trainings and published additional research-based materials:

1. Let's Move It training for in-service teachers = two 4-hour parts on separate days. *Day 1:* Let's Move It program (4 h).

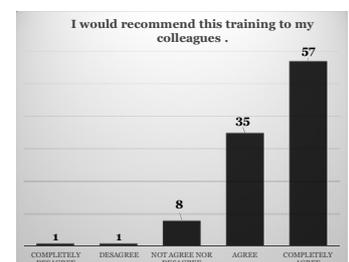
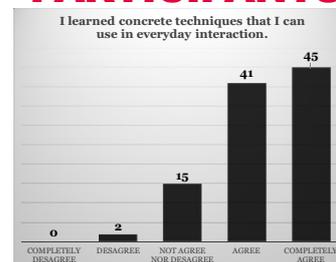
Day 2: Interaction techniques (4 h) Participants: 190 school staff member from 30 different secondary schools.

2. Training in University of Jyväskylä = 4 x 4 hours. Two university course for students of PE teachers aimed to improve the use of interaction techniques. Participants: 35 novice PE teachers

3. Several other activities and products, e.g.

- 15 presentations/trainings for Finnish sport and health sector actors
- www.letsmoveit.fi website as a material bank in promoting PA in schools
- High quality training videos of motivational interaction style (also to be distributed via Finnish Board of Education)
- Half-day seminar for the practitioners (fully booked, 150 participants)

FEEDBACK FROM TRAINING PARTICIPANTS



"...it happens often that in the end you start thinking: Well, all that theory and research sounds very good but how can I use it in practice? But in this course, I really felt that I actually got some tools to use in difficult situations."

"It was one of the most useful courses I have been to, both for my teaching and to life in general"

INTERACTION TECHNIQUES

- 🗣️ Open questions & interest
- 🏠 Providing structure and rationale
- 👂 Showing empathy and reflective listening
- 🗳️ Providing choice
- 🗨️ A style understanding resistance & non-controlling language
- 👍 Positive feedback & appreciation
- 🗣️ Advising without pressing



Demonstration videos and website remain as resources for Finnish health and physical activity promotion for many years to come, and disseminated by our partners (e.g. Schools on the Move, Board of Education).

Funding: Academy of Finland **Collaborators:** PE teacher education of the University of Jyväskylä, Finnish Schools On The Move (Liikkuva koulu), Finnish board of education, Sakki ry, Association of the directors of Finnish vocational schools (SAJO), SAKU ry.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION

Research evaluation of key project activities and teachers' interaction style change will be published as three manuscripts:

1. Hankonen, N. et al. Changes in PE teachers' motivational interaction style following a CPD training: Does intervention acceptability and intention play a role in interaction style enactment?
2. Renko, E. et al. Enhancing teachers' skills to promote adolescents' physical activity: Acceptability, reach and implementation of a Continuing Professional Development training.
3. Renko, E. et al. Changing one's motivational interaction style: Pre-service PE teachers' experiences in using motivational interaction techniques in practice.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Prof. Leen Haerens (Ghent University), Dr. Nathalie Aelterman (Ghent University), Prof. Taru Lintunen (University of Jyväskylä), Dr. Pilvikki Absetz (University of Eastern Finland), Prof. Anja Koski-Jännes (University of Tampere), and many others