Abstract

The aim of the present study is to describe and evaluate an ongoing peer-led model against bullying and cyberbullying carried out with Italian adolescents. The evaluation of the project was made through an experimental design consisting of a pre-test and a post-test. Participants in the study were 375 adolescents (20.3% males), enrolled in 9th to 13th grades. The experimental group involved 231 students with 42 peer educators, and the control group involved 144 students. Results showed a significant decrease in the experimental group as compared to the control group for all the variables except for cyberbullying. Besides, in the experimental group we found a significant increase in adaptive coping strategies like problem solving and a significant decrease in maladaptive coping strategies like avoidance: these changes mediate the changes in the behavioural variables. In particular, the decrease in avoidance predicts the decrease in victimization and cybervictimization for peer educators and for the other students in the experimental classes whereas the increase in problem solving predicts the decrease in cyberbullying only in the peer educators group. Results are discussed following recent reviews on evidence based efficacy of peer led models.