“My Life – I decide” study protocol: A health promoting school intervention to promote physical and mental health and well-being among 10th grade students in Denmark

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Background and objective

- Strategies to improve mental health and well-being of young people are essential as poor mental health increases the risk of not completing secondary education.
- “My life – I decide” (My Life) is a multicomponent health-promoting school intervention aimed at fostering physical and mental health and well-being in Danish 10th grade students (aged 15-16). The intervention seeks to enhance social and emotional skills and health literacy and promote a healthy class and school environment.
- Objective: To describe the theoretical foundation, intervention design, and evaluation methods of the My Life study.

Methods

Theoretical framework of the ‘My life’ intervention

The school-based intervention draws on the health promoting school approach*, education outside the classroom**, action learning, and life skills***. Additionally, close collaboration between municipal health consultants, schools, and local actors ensures a systems approach and distinguishes My Life from previous health promoting school interventions.

The ‘My life’ intervention

- Preparing the collaboration and 2 days training program for health consultants.
- A 12-week educational program on mental and physical health outside the classroom led by health consultants.
- Systems-oriented processes at school and community levels before and after the educational program.

Study design

A controlled waiting-list design with four schools implementing the intervention in 2025/26 and four in 2026/27. Approximately 500 students (28 classes) participate, with outcomes assessed at baseline, post-program, and 5 months later. A process evaluation explores implementation, mechanisms and context through focus groups, interviews, and observations (see fig. 1).

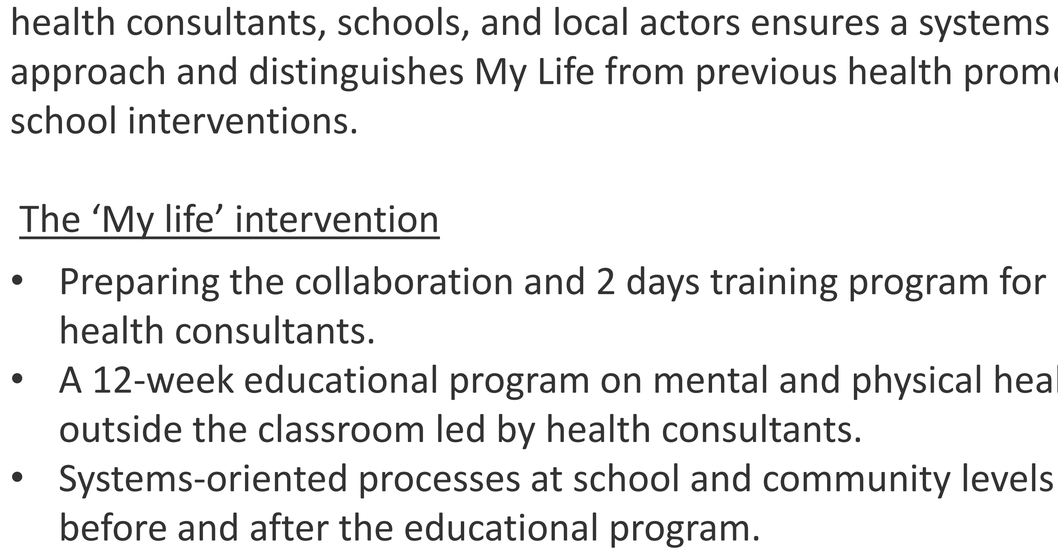


Fig 1: Study design

Discussion

The My Life study is expected to significantly contribute to the field of health promotion in secondary education.

Evidence is provided on the effectiveness and feasibility of this multicomponent health promoting school intervention.

The evaluation will synthesize the evidence and evaluate if the comprehensive intervention can be recommended for implementation at national scale.



Pictures from the educational program and the sessions ‘Values’, ‘Strengths’ and ‘Positive communities’

Dissemination and impact

Results will be shared via peer-reviewed publications, conferences, and public engagement efforts such as media outreach. A freely available intervention manual for health consultants and teachers will ensure scalability and adoption of My Life in diverse educational settings.

* Langford, R., Bonell, C., Jones, H., Pouliou, T., Murphy, S., Waters, E., Komro, K., Gibbs, L., Magnus, D., & Campbell, R. (2015). The World Health Organization’s Health Promoting Schools framework: A Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*, *15*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-1360-y
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*** Ozer, S., & Bertelsen, P. (2020). Developing and Validating a Short Scale Assessing Generic Life Skills. *Psychological Studies*, *65*(3), 327–335. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-020-00560-0