



Robin
together we learn better.

A The Urban
Assembly

**CASE STUDY
BRONX LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**



**Improved belonging &
mental health outcomes
after innovative connection-
building program**

According to the CDC and US Surgeon General, students who are more connected with others achieve better academic and mental health outcomes including higher grades and test scores, better attendance and graduation rates and decreased probability of engaging in risky behavior.

THE CHALLENGE

In the spring of 2024, the school leadership at the Bronx Leadership Academy partnered with Robin and Urban Assembly to identify school-wide and grade-level strengths and challenges and address areas of challenge with evidence-based solutions to build community and connection. This partnership effort was funded by a grant from The Wellness Classroom.

THE SOLUTION

In the spring of 2024, the Urban Assembly (UA) and Robin partnered to improve student well-being in the 9th grade through direct skill instruction and school ecosystem alignment. In March 2024, forty-four 9th grade students participated in a pilot program implementing the Robin Connection Diagnostic Assessment[®] (CDA) and mental well-being curriculum in their advisory classes. The students took the anonymous assessment, which provided a data-driven snapshot of their feelings of connection, belonging and mental health. In addition, the Urban Assembly Resilient Scholars Program (UARSP) Implementation Rubric provided a valuable ecosystem-wide tool for understanding the school culture, history, and community, and recommended essential whole-school implementation support.

Robin pre-program CDA[®] results indicated that the areas of challenge for these students included feeling a lack of love and support from others, missing a sense of community at school, feeling uncomfortable with the amount of pressure they faced, and feeling a lack of meaning in their lives.

Informed by both the UARSP Rubric and the Robin assessment results, the team provided a 3 month action plan of Robin curriculum and UA support for the 9th grade students. Specifically, they were given 5 targeted video-based, connection-building lessons with individual metacognitive activities, group discussion prompts, and an individual/group reflection. Urban Assembly's professional SEL facilitator worked with the team to ensure best-in-class implementation by providing informative, on-the-ground teacher guidance and support.

When students completed the 3-month action plan, they retook the assessment to measure their growth and progress towards the outcomes of improved connection, belonging and positive mental health.



SKILLS LEARNED

- ✔ Strategies to manage stress & anxiety
- ✔ How to build authentic peer relationships
- ✔ Cognitive self-care practices
- ✔ Finding meaning & purpose in life



THE RESULTS

67%

increase in the percent of students who feel more connected to their school and community

100%

of the targeted challenge areas showed significant positive improvement after students learned the skills

Post-program results showed that 70% of students agreed with positive connection statements, up 67% from pre-program CDA[®] results where only 42% of the students agreed with the positive connection statements. Further, the Bronx Leadership Academy reported a noticeable increase in focus on building a more connected environment and increased feelings of belonging. The teachers also reported that they learned strategies from the curriculum and the UA facilitator that created a positive classroom environment where everyone felt that they were a respected and valued member of the group.

Students enjoyed the conversations, looked forward to advisory time, and the prompts led to deeper conversations. The teachers also reported that they learned strategies from the curriculum and the UA facilitator that created a positive classroom environment where everyone felt a respected and valued member of the group.

Post program CDA[®] results indicated that a greater percentage of students:

- Felt loved and supported by others
- Believed they were part of a positive school community
- Believed they had a purpose in life
- Felt more comfortable with the amount of pressure they face

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