



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS
4340 East West Highway, Suite 402
Bethesda, MD 20814

*Enhancing the mental health and
educational competence of all children.*

Phone: 301-657-0270
Fax: 301-657-0275 • TTY: 301-657-4155
Web: www.nasponline.org

Effectiveness of School-Based Violence Prevention Programs

Prepared by
Jeffrey L. Charvat, PhD
Director of Research and Information Services

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services conducted a systematic review of research on universal school-based prevention programs that target violence and aggressive behaviors.

Methods

Articles published before December 2004 were considered for inclusion in the review if they evaluated a universal program, assessed at least one violent outcome, were conducted in countries with high-income economies, and included a comparison group. Violent outcomes included self-reported or observed aggression or violence, but also conduct disorder, externalizing behavior, acting out or conduct problems, delinquency, suspensions, and disciplinary referrals.

Results

Fifty-three studies were identified. The median sample size was 563 students, and the median follow up time was six months. The classroom was the principal setting for the interventions at all grade levels, and all grade levels were represented by the studies. In lower grades, the focus of interventions tended to be on disruptive and antisocial behavior, while in higher grades the focus tended to shift to general violence and specific types of violence. Conclusions were based upon the strength of the studies' design and execution and size and consistency of the reported effects. Effective interventions were assessed for their applicability in diverse settings, populations, and circumstances.

The median relative reduction in violent behavior for all grades combined was 15.0 percent, with the following grade-level program effects: 32.4 percent for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, 18.0 percent for elementary school, 7.3 percent for middle school, and 29.2 percent for high school. All program strategies and foci were associated with reduction in violent behavior. Programs were similarly effective in settings from low socioeconomic status and higher crime rates to higher socioeconomic status and lower crime rates.

Conclusion

The Task Force on Community Preventive Services concluded that there is strong evidence for the effectiveness of universal school-based programs to prevent violent and aggressive behavior, and it recommended their use.

Reference

Hahn, R., Fuqua-Whitley, D., Wethington, H., Lowy, J., Liberman, A., Crosby, A., Fullilove, M., Johnson, R., Moscicki, E., Price, L., Snyder, S. R., Tuma, F., Cory, S., Stone, G., Mukhopadhaya, K., Chattopadhyay, S., & Dahlberg, L. (2007, August 10). The effectiveness of universal school-based programs for the prevention of violence and aggressive behavior: A report on the recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services. *MMWR: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 56(No. RR-7). Retrieved August 17, 2007, from www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5607a1.htm.