

School-Based Violence Prevention Programs To Reduce Bullying and Aggressive Behaviors

Review 2

Mytton, J., DiGuseppi, C., Gough, D., Taylor, R., & Logan, S. (2006). School-based secondary prevention programmes for preventing violence. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2006(3), CD004606. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16856051>.

Objectives	Examine the effect of school-based violence prevention programs designed to reduce aggression, violence, bullying, conflict, or anger; this review updated previous work by the authors (see Review 3).
Studies Included	Fifty-six U.S. and international studies published from 1979 to 2002
Participants in the Studies	Preschool through high school students identified as exhibiting, or at risk of, aggressive behavior
Outcomes	Aggressive or violent behavior, school and agency responses to acts of aggression, and violent injuries
Limitations of the Studies	The studies had generally poor reporting on study design and quality and were often missing information regarding allocation concealment and randomization. Statistical analysis was often improper, using the number of participants at posttest rather than the number randomized. Loss to follow-up varied considerably and was, in some cases, significant.

Results

These studies looked at some or all of the following areas: aggression, violence, bullying, conflict, anger, and school/agency responses to these behaviors.

Programs incorporated various components, including—

- Skills training on nonresponse to provocative situations (e.g., conflict resolution, conflict avoidance, specific problem-solving skills, anger management, relaxation, stress reduction)
- Relationship/social skills (family and peer)
- Peer mediation
- Parent skills training and/or community intervention

It was reported that different programs relied on school officials, family counselors, and/or nonschool personnel to carry out interventions. Components of the programs were delivered to individuals, groups, schools, and families. Duration of the interventions varied from 1 hour to over 53 hours, spread over 2

academic years. Personnel training requirements were not specified. None of the studies in this review reported data on violent injuries.

Findings of the review were as follows: (1) Aggressive behavior was significantly reduced in intervention groups compared with no intervention groups immediately after intervention in 34 studies with data. This effect was maintained in seven studies that reported 12-month follow-up. Further analyses of subgroups indicated that interventions designed to improve relationships or social skills were more effective than interventions designed to teach skills of nonresponse to provocative situations. (2) Improvements in the reduction of both reported or observed aggressive behavior and school responses to aggression can be achieved in both primary and secondary school-age groups, and in both mixed-sex groups and boys-only groups. (3) Further research is needed to clarify that these benefits can be maintained beyond 12 months.