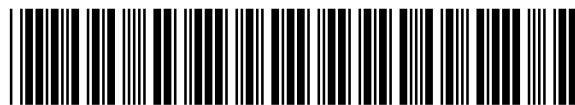


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## School-Based Violence Prevention Programs: A Review of Selected Programs with Empirical Evidence

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**SUMMARY.** School violence in the United States is an issue of grave concern for educators, students, parents, and communities. Many schools have responded to the problem by initiating prevention interventions without empirical evidence of effectiveness, assuming it is better to do something rather than to do nothing. In some cases though, more harm than good may result when such intervention strategies and programs are implemented only for the sake of doing something in response to the problem. The literature review examines research on school vio-

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lence and provides a review of selected school-based violence prevention programs with beginning empirical support of their effectiveness. The authors stress the importance of schools implementing school-based violence prevention programs that have produced empirical evidence of effectiveness. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS.** School, violence, prevention, program interventions, empirical

School violence in the United States is an issue of grave concern for educators as well as parents. News about school violence has produced fears and anxieties in schools and communities, especially following the Columbine shooting of April 1999. The schools, which were once viewed as a safe place where children can learn, have turned out to be the new breeding grounds for this growing epidemic. In 1998, for instance, 43 of every 1000 children were victims of nonfatal violent crime while at school or on their way to and from school (Mytton, DiGusepi, Gough, Taylor, & Logan, 2002). Teachers and school administrators are victims of school violence as well, and are concerned for their personal safety while working at school (Petersen, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1996). According to the Hammond's (1998) Testimony on Youth Violence, preliminary findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that in recent years, the average age of homicide offenders and victims has grown younger and younger. Data also suggest that youth violence has grown worse because their fighting has become more lethal. Homicide remains the second leading cause of death for young Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 and the leading cause of death for African Americans in this age group.

The scope of concern about school safety not only includes chances of serious violence like shootouts, but also less serious forms of peer hostility, such as physical aggression such as shoving and pushing, face-to-face verbal harassment, public humiliation, rumor mongering, and bullying (Juvonen, 2001). Although men are more engaged in violent behavior, data reveal that more and more girls are also engaging in violent behavior (Coombs-Richardson, 2000; Tuckson et al., 2000).

Recent figures from the mid 1990s showed that the overall incidence of both weapon carrying and fighting-two risk factors strongly associ-

ated with violence-decrease 1997, the risk of serious violence than for suburban or rural student deaths associated with violence sent a 40% drop from the 1990s are indications that violent crime is being treated. Data taken from a survey of school principals that asked principals to report to police from the 1990s violence occurred in 4% of schools.

Although data indicate that violence in schools, and that only a small type of crime, it also indicates that violence is extremely high. The police by principals for the 1990s violence, including murder, suicide, weapons. They also included property crimes, vandalism, and found to be higher in schools with lower socioeconomic status (SES) students with higher levels of violence. Although most adolescents have not experienced a appreciable number of threats, they are threatened with violence (Columbine) violence was verbal threats by students (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome) or shoving, sexual harassment, or use of guns, classroom/bullying violence, and the use of knives.

In the past, bullying was considered a normal developmental process. It is a subject of numerous studies pointing out that it is clearly a problem for school-age children. Research has shown that the relationship between bullying and mental health is a complex one. Research has shown that bullying is related to mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and self-harm. Although boys are more exposed to indirect and more

selected school-based violence prevention programs have produced empirical support of their effectiveness. The effectiveness of schools implementing school-based violence prevention programs have produced empirical evidence of effectiveness. Available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> © 2004 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

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...ates is an issue of grave concern for schools. Research about school violence has produced mixed results in communities, especially following the 1999 Columbine shooting. The schools, which were once considered safe havens, have turned out to be hotspots for a growing epidemic. In 1998, for instance, more than 1 million victims of nonfatal violent crime were reported from school (Mytton, DiGuiseppi, & Gendall, 2000). Teachers and school administrators are concerned for their personal safety and the safety of their students (Petersen, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 2000). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (1998) Testimony on Youth Violence reported that in recent years, the average age of homicide victims has become younger and younger. Data also indicate that school violence has become worse because their fighting has become more frequent. It remains the second leading cause of death for children in the ages of 15 and 24 and the leading cause of death for African Americans in this age group.

School safety not only includes chances of physical assault but also less serious forms of peer violence such as shoving and pushing, verbal abuse, public humiliation, rumor mongering, and sexual harassment. Although men are more engaged in violent behavior, more girls are also engaging in violence (Tuckson et al., 2000). Studies have shown that the overall incidence of school violence has increased. Two risk factors strongly associ-

ated with violence-decreased among adolescents. Between 1993 and 1997, the risk of serious violence in school, which is greater for urban than for suburban or rural students, declined 29% overall. The 26 violent deaths associated with schools that took place in 1998-99 represented a 40% drop from the previous year (Tuckson et al., 2000). There are indications that violent crime in schools is geographically concentrated. Data taken from a U.S. Department of Education survey of school principals that asked about the number and types of crimes reported to police from the 1996-97 school year showed that 60% of the violence occurred in 4% of the schools (Cantor & Wright, 2002).

Although data indicate that serious violence is not a problem for many schools, and that only a small percentage of schools seemed to have this type of crime, it also indicates that for a small percentage of schools, violence is extremely high. The number and types of crimes reported to the police by principals for the 1996-1997 school year included serious violence, including murder, suicide, robbery, rape, and assault or fights with weapons. They also included fighting or physical attacks without weapons, property crimes, vandalism, and petty theft. Weapon carrying was found to be higher in schools with a higher percentage of low socioeconomic status (SES) students in the school, larger schools, and schools with higher levels of violence around the school (Price & Everett, 1997). Although most adolescents have never been victims of violent crime, an appreciable number of them have reported being assaulted, robbed, or threatened with violence (Connor, 2002). The prevalent type of school violence was verbal threats by students, followed by organic problems of students (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, "crack babies"), followed by pushing or shoving, sexual harassment, punching or hitting, kicking, the presence or use of guns, classroom/building vandalism, rumor/peer escalation of violence, and the use of knives/ice picks/razors.

In the past, bullying was not considered to be part of the school violence phenomenon in the United States and was thought to be part of a normal developmental process among children. Bullying is now the subject of numerous studies and is being examined in light of new data pointing out that it is clearly a type of aggression that is harmful to many school-age children. Research findings show that there are consistent relations between bullying and violent behavior. It is not a normative aspect of youth development, but rather a marker for more serious violent behaviors, including weapon carrying, frequent fighting, and fighting-related injury (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt, 2003). Although boys are more exposed to bullying than girls, girls are more exposed to indirect and more subtle forms of bullying (Olweus, 1994).

Violence concerning male-female relationships has also become a point of concern (Hilton, Harris, Rice, Krans, & Lavigne, 1998; Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997).

The causes of violence as perceived by teachers and school administrators are oftentimes the lack of parental supervision/ involvement and a lack of rules or family structure. Exposure to violence in the mass media was also blamed by some authors (Petersen, Piezrak, & Speaker, 1996; Price & Everett, 1997). Children do not achieve the prosocial skills needed when they do not have role models at home to display the appropriate behavior, or when they are exposed to inappropriate modeling. When they do not find emotional and moral stability at home, they turn to gangs where they can meet their needs for social acceptance and are consequently socialized to its norms and values.

Several factors have been shown to predict a child's (7-14 years old) risk for violence. These include individual factors (e.g., children who have been victims of violence or witnesses to violence, poor academic skills or learning problems, substance abuse); family factors (e.g., poor parenting, lack of supervision, inconsistent discipline); and societal and/or community factors (e.g., social acceptance of violence, high rates of crime) (Cooper, Lutembacher, & Faccia, 2000). The individual, family, and community factors all combine to produce this societal problem.

A national study on school violence and prevention (Petersen, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1996) found that students most frequently seen as perpetrators were males, came from a Caucasian or African American background, and were the same age or older than their victims. Perpetrators were most frequently in middle or high school, lived in unstable single-parent homes, had below average academic success, and were generally involved with drugs or alcohol. The most frequent victims, on the other hand, were males, from a Caucasian or African American background, who were the same age or younger than the perpetrator. They were usually students most likely to be in middle or high school from unstable single parent homes. Their academic success was viewed as below average and their gang affiliation was largely unknown, as was their involvement with drugs or alcohol. High schools with the highest levels of violence tended to be located in urban areas and have a high percentage of minority students, compared to high schools that reported no crime to the police. They also tended to be located in lower SES areas with high residential mobility.

Numerous prevention programs have been implemented to reduce the number of violent incidents. However, without necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills, schools with high rates of violence and prevention measures and that have become problematic (Cano, Speaker, 1996). They play a role in ward changing individual behavior while schools with lesser emphasis on preventive instruction are less likely to have implemented such programs (Price & Everett, 1997). Schools are also more likely to have a history of using the nature of reported incidents for planning. Many of these programs are limited in scope and only address individual incidents and thus not effective. The most common strategies include the use of metal detectors, random or scheduled locker searches, increased lighting, peer education, and conflict resolution skills/programs to increase parental involvement.

Although the efficacy of many programs is documented, schools use them to reduce the incidence of school violence. The lack of policy makers as to which strategies are most effective (Farrell, Meyer, Kung, and Speaker, 1996) mentioned, the widespread use of these programs is unlikely to solve the problem."

More harm than good may be done by violent behaviors if interventions are implemented only for the sake of doing something. School authorities might think that doing anything at all. A number of programs have been implemented without any empirical support for their effectiveness below.

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Numerous prevention programs have been developed by schools to reduce the number of violent incidents and to teach children the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to deal with this situation. Oftentimes, schools with high levels of violence also reported high use of prevention measures and tended to combat violence after the issue had become problematic (Cantor & Wright, 2002; Petersen, Pietrzak, & Speaker, 1996). They place more emphasis on programs geared toward changing individual behavior, such as behavior modification while schools with lesser rates of violence tended to place higher priority on preventive instruction. Schools with lower levels of risk were less likely to have implemented a program or report plans to do so (Price & Everett, 1997). Schools with serious crime problems were also more likely to have a violence prevention program in place, often using the nature of reported crimes as a framework for their prevention planning. Many of these programs were not integrated into the curriculum and only addressed incidences of violence after the fact and were thus not effective. The most commonly used strategies in this category include the use of metal detectors, the use of security personnel, random or scheduled locker searches, crisis management services, increased lighting, peer education, cognitive and social skills training, conflict resolution skills/peer mediation, cameras, police dogs, programs to increase parental involvement, and so forth.

Although the efficacy of these prevention programs still has yet to be documented, schools use them anyway as a reactive stance to the incidence of school violence. There is limited data, therefore, to inform policy makers as to which strategies work best with specific populations. As Farrell, Meyer, Kung, and Sullivan (2001) noted, "no matter how well intentioned, the widespread implementation of programs of unknown effectiveness is unlikely to have a significant impact on this serious problem."

More harm than good may be done to children with aggressive or violent behaviors if interventive strategies and programs are implemented only for the sake of doing something in response to this problem. Some school authorities might think that doing something is better than not doing anything at all. A number of school-based violence prevention programs have been implemented over the last decade, with some positive empirical support for effectiveness. Selected programs are outlined below.

## SELECTED SCHOOL-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

### *Peacemakers Program*

Shapiro, Burgoon, Welker, and Clough (2002) documented the efficacy of the Peacemakers Program, a school-based intervention for students in grades four through eight. The program included a primary prevention component delivered by teachers and a remedial component implemented by school psychologists and counselors with referred students. The intervention was based on a 17-lesson curriculum which takes about 45 minutes to conduct and emphasized the importance of infusing program content into student's everyday life by helping them learn to recognize potentially problematic situations and then recall and use the psychosocial skills called for by the situation. The goal of the program was for Peacemaker's principles and strategies to become part of the culture of the school.

The program attempted to strengthen participant aspirations for non-violent behavior and strengthen student motivation to learn the psychosocial skills by teaching anger management and conflict avoidance techniques, conflict resolution techniques, self-perception training, structured problem-solving techniques, assertiveness training, communication skills, and narrative psychotherapy. The study included 2,000 students in an urban public school system, with pre and post program assessment. The program resulted in positive change in 6 of the 7 aggression-related variables examined, including knowledge of psychosocial skills, self-reported aggressive behavior, and teacher-reported aggression, with a 41% decrease in aggression-related disciplinary incidents and a 67% reduction in suspensions for violent behavior. The no-treatment control group students over time increased their aggression, compared to the decreased aggression in the Peacemakers group.

### *SMART Talk*

Bosworth, Espelage, and DuBay (1998) used a multimedia, computer-based school intervention program called SMART Talk. The computer program uses games, simulations, cartoons, animation, and interactive interviews to enable young adolescents to learn new ways of resolving conflict without violence. Ninety-eight seventh graders in Tuscon, Arizona completed the 175-item Teen Conflict Survey (pretest) and 83% of them participated in the posttest 4 weeks later. The

Teen Conflict Survey was used to assess issues: knowledge and attitudes of conflict resolution, negotiation and anger management in conflict situations, self-reported self-esteem, impulsivity, and behavior, confidence, and intentions. Results showed that most students reported behaviors may contribute to violence from 43% (pretest) to 77% (posttest). There was also a 67% decrease in Student's intentions to use violence, and trouble behavior decreased 33% at school, and 54% at home. It was also found to be popular with

### *Fighting Fair Model*

The Fighting Fair Model curriculum teaches students to replace aggressive behavior with non-violent behavior. The Fighting Fair curriculum has a (2) focus on the problem, (3) open mind, (4) treat a person with responsibility for your actions, and (5) grades four, five, and six) were chosen randomly. Three control classrooms were chosen randomly. The pre and post teacher-administered and written evaluations by students provided multiple-choice being categorized from mean and post-test survey scores mean scores of the treatment by the school staff also dependent of fighting occurred a control group during the Muir-McClain, & Halasya

**D VIOLENCE PREVENTION  
EIR EFFECTIVENESS**

Clough (2002) documented the efficacy of a school-based intervention for students. The program included a primary component for teachers and a remedial component for students and counselors with referred students on a 17-lesson curriculum which emphasized the importance of intervention in a student's everyday life by helping them identify problematic situations and then recall and describe the situation. The goal of the program was to help students understand the principles and strategies to become part of the solution.

The program aimed to strengthen participant aspirations for personal and student motivation to learn the skills of anger management and conflict avoidance techniques, self-perception training, assertiveness training, communication skills, and problem-solving. The study included 2,000 students in a randomized control system, with pre and post program assessments. There was a positive change in 6 of the 7 aggression-related variables, including knowledge of psychosocial factors, teacher-reported aggression-related disciplinary incidents, and student self-reported aggression. The no-treatment group increased their aggression, compared to the Peacemakers group.

Powell (1998) used a multimedia, computer-based program called SMART Talk. The program used simulations, cartoons, animation, and role-playing to help adolescents learn new ways of resolving conflicts. Ninety-eight seventh graders in a randomized control system completed a 5-item Teen Conflict Survey (pre-test) and another 5-item survey in the posttest 4 weeks later. The

Teen Conflict Survey was used to collect baseline data on the following issues: knowledge and attitudes regarding non-violent and violent strategies of conflict resolution, self-efficacy as it relates to conflict resolution and anger management, intentions to use nonviolent strategies in conflict situations, self-reported caring and noncaring behaviors, self-esteem, impulsivity, nonviolent role models, and peer influence. The dependent variables were knowledge, self-knowledge, prosocial behavior, confidence, intentions, trouble behavior, and computer use. Results showed that most students' self knowledge on how certain behaviors may contribute to the escalation of a conflict situation increased from 43% (pretest) to 77% (posttest). Students who reported helping another student solve a problem doubled from 15% (pretest) to 30% (posttest). There was also a decrease in name calling from 45% to 23%. Student's intentions to use nonviolent strategies increased from 10% to 67%, and trouble behavior decreased from 32% to 23% at home, 44% to 33% at school, and 54% to 6% in the community. SMART Talk was also found to be popular with both males and females.

***Fighting Fair Model***

The Fighting Fair Model curriculum was implemented in Florida. The curriculum teaches students to deal with conflict positively and to replace aggressive behaviors with constructive ones. The rules for the Fighting Fair curriculum are the following: (1) identify the problem, (2) focus on the problem, (3) attack the problem, (4) listen with an open mind, (5) treat a person's feelings with respect, and (6) take responsibility for your actions. Three classes (one class each from grades four, five, and six) were selected as the experimental group and three control classrooms (one class from each of grades four to six) were chosen randomly. The experimental effect was measured by a pre and post teacher-administered survey of attitudes and knowledge and written evaluations by school staff of aggressive behaviors. Students provided multiple-choice responses to the survey, the responses being categorized from most prosocial to antisocial response. Pre-test and post-test survey scores improved for the treatment group while the mean scores of the control group changed little. The written reports by the school staff also decreased for both groups. No reported incident of fighting occurred among subjects in either the experimental or control group during the project implementation period (Powell, Muir-McClain, & Halasyamani, 1995).



project named BRAVE (Baltimoreans was implemented for two years at d in a neighborhood with a high inci- ce. Peers, teachers, and administra-

They underwent training sessions cation skills, problem identification trolled in pairs in the hallways, cafe- patrol belts that identified them as isputants toward a solution or com- ion between them. The project coor- member, monitored the mediation ne project, disputants signed agree- ow-up by the project coordinator in- were honored for the remainder of rmation about a comparison group isciplinary suspensions, reduced re- 93% to 80%, improved faculty at- proved student attendance from 91% of less fighting suggested a favor- the school atmosphere (Powell, 95).

ed the impact of a school-based cur- e among urban sixth-grade students chmond Public Schools. Outcome beginning (T1), middle (T2), and riculum's implementation was stag- pjective that every sixth grader com- school, classrooms were scheduled to ither the fall or spring semester. The ow-Stith curriculum, which focuses ways in which the host, agent, and plence. The Prothrow-Stith curricu- dle school students using concepts *Small Planet*. The 18 sessions fo- respect for individual differences (2 nd risk factors (3 sessions); anger

management (3 sessions); personal values (2 sessions); and non violent alternatives to fighting (3 sessions). The curriculum emphasized prosocial behavior and norms. Four prevention specialists trained in conflict resolution implemented the curriculum. The frequency of violent behavior was assessed with the Violent Behavior Scale from the Behavioral Frequency Scales.

Fall participants reported a lower frequency of being threatened by someone with a weapon than spring participants. Among boys, those who participated in the program in the fall reported significantly lower rates of fighting than boys in the delayed-treatment group. This effect was not significant for the girls. Boys who participated in the fall tended to report lower rates of violent behavior at T2 and T3 than boys who participated in the spring. Girls showed a trend in the opposite direction. The one exception was physical fighting. By the end of the school year, the frequency of fighting in the delayed-treatment group had decreased to the level of the fall participants. Boys overall reported significantly higher frequencies than girls across measures, including the Violent Behavior Scale, physical fighting, threatening someone with a weapon, being threatened by someone with a weapon, and the Problem Behavior Scale. The differential impact on girls and boys was a result of the fact that indirect aggression, which girls are most likely to employ, was not addressed in the curriculum.

The study concluded that the fact that boys in the delayed-treatment group showed a greater rate of increase in the frequency of problem behaviors at T2 than boys who participated in the program in the fall suggests that the first year of middle school may be a critical time to intervene.

#### *Mastery Learning Intervention and The Good Behavior Game*

Dolan et al. (1993) assessed the impact of two interventions: the Good Behavior Game (GBG), which was aimed at reducing aggressive and shy behaviors, and the Mastery Learning (ML), designed to improve poor reading achievement, an antecedent for later depressive symptoms as well as a correlate of aggressive and shy behaviors. The GBG and ML are universal interventions that were carried out in 19 schools in 5 urban areas in Baltimore City, from fall to spring of first grade. Intervention and control classrooms were used. The GBG a classroom team-based behavior management strategy that promotes good behavior by rewarding teams that do not exceed maladaptive behavior standards. A team could win if the total number of team

checkmarks did not exceed four at the end of the game period. The winning teams received tangible rewards like stickers or erasers and later they engaged in rewarding activity like extra recess or class privileges. The ML intervention consisted of an extensive and systematically applied enrichment of the reading curriculum. Critical aspects of the program included a group-based approach to mastery, a more flexible corrective process, and material support. Measures included teacher ratings, peer nominations, and standardized achievement test measures in the fall and spring of first grade in both intervention and control classrooms.

Results showed that the GBG had an impact for boys on aggressive behavior as nominated by peers, but it had no effect on peer nominations of aggressive behavior among girls. The frequencies of peer-rated aggressive girls were markedly lower even before the GBG. For both boys and girls, GBG had the greatest impact on children who began the school year with more aggressive ratings by teachers. The GBG also had an impact on shy behavior as rated by teachers for both boys and girls. However, its impact on peer nominations of shy behavior was limited to the shy behavior item, i.e., "has few friends" for girls. The results for the ML intervention indicate that it raised reading achievement test scores for both boys and girls through the end of first grade. The ML intervention primarily benefited boys at the lower end of the achievement continuum. For girls, ML enhanced achievement among already high-achieving girls by boosting them into the top achievement groups. The study concluded that the GBG was found to be an effective intervention for reducing aggressive behavior among first-grade children, and the ML intervention was found to be effective intervention for improving reading achievement among first grade children. For girls only, there was weak evidence that ML improved shy behavior as rated by teachers.

#### *A Combined Intervention*

Sprague et al. (2001) investigated the effects of a one-year universal intervention package aimed at improving the safety and social behavior of students in nine treatment and six comparison elementary and middle schools in the Pacific Northwest. Treatment and comparison schools were not randomly selected but rather chosen by local administrators. The project included 4 major intervention strategies aimed at building personnel and students. Technical assistance was provided; the entire staff of each treatment school received an eight-hour in-service implementing the Sec-

ond Step curriculum, and an Behavioral Support Model. The school approach to addressing and coping with challenging training, technical assistance, mate. Schools taught lessons "respect" and "responsibility" havior. Second, each school ment, monitoring, and positive teaching and maintain pattern feedbacks on school regarding Support in Schools" were also Prevention Curriculum was it has shown it to be effective in aggressive playground behavior.

Results showed that all three discipline referrals in the baseline year and showed growth schools. With regard to schools detected in the ratings based the treatment schools, the score to rate the status of several. The checklist asked raters to progress," or "not started" area, classroom, and individual schools reported 50% of school room, and 30% individual treatment schools reported 57% classroom, and 42% individual ratings were obtained in the dents were also given a test skills (e.g., empathy). All growth measure after instruction.

The average percent correct scores increased to 55% across the qualitative effects of intervention teachers, administrators, and and four comparison groups lack of comprehensive approach procedures were more reactive most often to at-risk students

the end of the game period. The winners like stickers or erasers and later like extra recess or class privileges. an extensive and systematically appropriate curriculum. Critical aspects of the approach to mastery, a more flexible support. Measures included teacher-rated standardized achievement test measures in both intervention and control class-

and an impact for boys on aggressive but it had no effect on peer nominations; girls. The frequencies of peer-rated were even before the GBG. For both the greatest impact on children who began the ratings by teachers. The GBG also was rated by teachers for both boys and nominations of shy behavior was limited as few friends" for girls. The results showed that it raised reading achievement test scores by the end of first grade. The ML intervention was at the lower end of the achievement test scores and raised achievement among already average children into the top achievement groups. The GBG was found to be an effective intervention for aggressive behavior among first-grade children, and to be effective intervention for improving first grade children. For girls only, the GBG improved shy behavior as rated by

the effects of a one-year universal intervention on the safety and social behavior of children in comparison elementary and middle schools. Treatment and comparison schools were selected by local administrators. The program strategies aimed at building personnel capacity was provided; the entire staff of each school was in-service implementing the Sec-

ond Step curriculum, and an additional four hour session of the Effective Behavioral Support Model. The EBS Model is a multiple system, whole school approach to addressing the problems posed by antisocial students and coping with challenging forms of student behavior. It is a system of training, technical assistance, and evaluation of school discipline and climate. Schools taught lessons throughout the year about rules on "safety," "respect" and "responsibility" and posted rules about those patterns of behavior. Second, each school established a consistent system of enforcement, monitoring, and positive reinforcement to enhance the effect of rule teaching and maintain patterns of desired student behavior. Data-based feedbacks on school regarding their responses to the "Assessing Behavior Support in Schools" were also given. Finally, the Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum was installed in each treatment school. Research has shown it to be effective in increasing positive social skills and reducing aggressive playground behavior.

Results showed that all treatment schools reported reductions in office discipline referrals in the intervention year when compared to the baseline year and showed greater improvement relative to comparison schools. With regard to school safety, no meaningful differences were detected in the ratings based from the Oregon School Safety Survey. In the treatment schools, the school discipline team was asked at midyear to rate the status of several features of Effective Behavioral Support. The checklist asked raters to indicate whether an item is "in place," "in progress," or "not started" across the areas of school-wide, common area, classroom, and individual student systems. Treatment middle schools reported 50% of school wide, 2% common area, 48% classroom, and 30% individual student item as "in place." Elementary treatment schools reported 57% of school wide, 33% common area, 63% classroom, and 42% individual student items as "in place." The highest ratings were obtained in the school-wide and classroom systems. Students were also given a test to assess their ability to define essential skills (e.g., empathy). All grade levels in all schools improved on this measure after instruction.

The average percent correct in the baseline was 46% and average scores increased to 55% across all grades. As an additional indicator of the qualitative effects of intervention, focus group interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents were conducted at four treatment and four comparison groups. The four comparison groups reported a lack of comprehensive approaches to school-wide discipline. Discipline procedures were more reactive than preventive and generally applied most often to at-risk students. They also reported the need for a consis-

tent, school-wide approach to behavioral management but noted a lack of technical support and training in this area. Treatment schools described consistent use of teaching school behavior expectations both school-wide and in classrooms.

### *Olweus*

Olweus (1994) systematically evaluated an intervention program that he developed with the campaign against bully/victim problems in Norwegian schools. The goal of the program was to reduce existing bully/victim problems as much as possible and to prevent the development of new problems. The program focused on creating a school environment characterized by warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults, on one hand, and firm limits to unacceptable behavior on the other. In cases of violations of rules, nonhostile, nonphysical sanctions were applied. The intervention program is based on an authoritative adult-child interaction, or child rearing model. The program utilized teachers and other school personnel like psychologists, social workers, and school counselors, as well as students and parents in the implementation. The measures used were translated into the school, class, and individual levels.

The results showed that there were marked reductions in the level of bully/victim problems for the periods studied. Reductions were obtained for both boys and girls and across all cohorts compared. There were also consensual agreements in the classes that the bully/victim problems have decreased considerably. The reductions in terms of percentages of students reporting being bullied or bullying others amounted to 50% or more in most comparisons. There was also a clear reduction in general antisocial behavior as well as improvement regarding the various aspects of the "social climate" of the class, such as improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and more positive attitudes toward school work and the school. At the same time, there was an increase in student satisfaction with school life. For several variables, the effects of the intervention program were more marked after 2 years than after 1 year. The intervention program not only affected existing victimization problems, but it also reduced the number of new victims. The program had thus both primary and secondary prevention effects.

### *CONCLUSION*

This paper was an examination of school violence in the United States and some of the limited evidence-based programmatic endeavors

that were developed and included a thorough assessment—the dramatic violence as well as the increasing problem that has proven to be harmful lying and physical peer hostility, verbal harassment and humiliation. High School in April 1994, the less dramatic types of peer violence, oftentimes stemming from the victim(s) of the bullying and

Some of the prevalent forms of school violence were discussed. The school violence are emerging and perpetrators, a heightened fact that school violence tends to occur in a manner in which male-female relationships tend to escalate levels of school violence. Economic status, family social structure were also examined in relation to school violence.

Finally, the paper examined empirical evidence on characteristics of the successful management techniques (e.g., computer-assisted interactive decision-making; curricular strategies; use of peer mediation; emphasized improved academic performance; environmental contributors to school violence reduction models that utilized student peers).

Much work remains to be done on school violence. As pointed out, indeed, been developed and tested statistical methodologies. Understanding and anti-bullying programs are of public relations value, but very little is known of outcomes or inform policy. Further research be focused for addressing the problem. Continue to develop, test, and apply the most effective models are

violent management but noted a lack in this area. Treatment schools de-school behavior expectations both

evaluated an intervention program that first bully/victim problems in Norway was to reduce existing bully/victim to prevent the development of new by creating a school environment characterized by involvement from adults, on the one hand, and notable behavior on the other. In cases where nonphysical sanctions were applied. The program was an authoritative adult-child interaction program that utilized teachers and other staff, social workers, and school counselors in the implementation. The measures were implemented at the school, class, and individual levels.

There were marked reductions in the level of violence studied. Reductions were obtained for both bullies and victims compared. There were also consistent reductions in bully/victim problems. The percentage of students reporting incidents of violence decreased by 50% or more in most comparisons. There was a decrease in general antisocial behavior as well as in aspects of the "social climate" of the school, such as discipline, more positive social relationships toward school work and the school. At the same time, student satisfaction with school life. For the intervention program were more marked. The intervention program not only affected existing violence but also reduced the number of new victims. The program had primary and secondary prevention effects.

## CONCLUSION

of school violence in the United States. Evidence-based programmatic endeavors

that were developed and implemented to address the problem. It included a thorough assessment of the phenomenon of school violence—the dramatic violence that results in serious injury and death, as well as the increasing problem of less serious, nonfatal violent crime that has proven to be harmful to school aged children. This includes bullying and physical peer hostility such as shoving, pushing, face-to-face verbal harassment and humiliation, and so forth. The events at Columbine High School in April 1999 made it clear that the consequences of the less dramatic types of peer hostility in schools can have tragic consequences, oftentimes stemming from a raging desire for revenge by the victim(s) of the bullying and hostility.

Some of the prevalent demographic patterns associated with school violence were discussed. The data make it clear that specific patterns of school violence are emerging, including younger and younger victims and perpetrators, a heightened level of school violence by females, the fact that school violence tends to be geographically concentrated, and the manner in which male-female relationships are increasingly contributing to escalating levels of school violence. Variables related to family socioeconomic status, family socialization, and academic achievement levels were also examined in relation to predictors of school violence.

Finally, the paper examined some school-based program models that featured empirical evidence of positive outcomes. Some of the key characteristics of the successful programs were the use of behavioral management techniques (e.g., anger management, conflict avoidance); computer-assisted interactive games and activities that promoted positive decision-making; curriculum-based structured conflict resolution strategies; use of peer mediators; cognitive development strategies that emphasized improved academic performance and/or understanding of environmental contributors to school violence; and the use of violence reduction models that utilized adult authoritarian figures combined with student peers.

Much work remains to be done to properly address the problem of school violence. As pointed out above, some innovative programs have, indeed, been developed and are currently being tested with appropriate statistical methodologies. Unfortunately, far more many violence reduction and anti-bullying programs operated by schools have great public relations value, but very little data to demonstrate the effectiveness of outcomes or inform policy makers on where public resources should be focused for addressing the problem. The obvious solution is to continue to develop, test, and adjust current programmatic approaches until the most effective models are isolated to work in specific environments

and with specific populations. This is the only way that schools will transform back to peaceful learning environments where students can focus on their personal and career development, as opposed to daily stressors and fears from their peers. The future viability of American schools, the students, and the communities-at-large will depend on whether this goal is successfully achieved.

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