



Introductory packet

Violence Prevention and Safe Schools

(2015 Revision)



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Violence Prevention and Safe Schools



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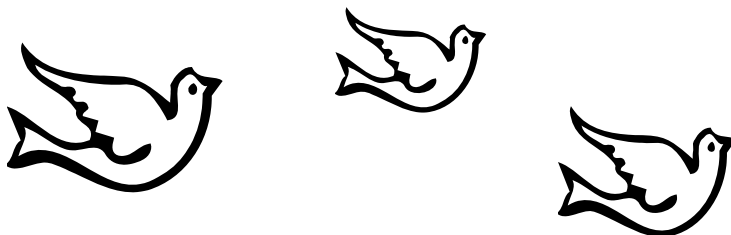
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The highly publicized school shootings of the 1990's generated nationwide concern about the safety of our schools. ... The school shootings frightened the public and generated a widespread belief that there was an epidemic of violence in our schools. As the facts ... demonstrate, this epidemic was a myth. School violence did not increase in the 1990's, it declined.

Dewey G. Cornell
Virginia Youth Violence Project

Introduction

- A. A Few Statistics on School Violence
- B. Violence Prevention and Safe Schools
- C. A Balanced Approach to Safe Schools
- D. Working together to create safe schools
 - *Exhibit: School Safety: A Collaborative Effort*
- E. Assessing School Safety as a Facet of School Climate



A. A Few Statistics on School Violence

Excerpts from: *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014* (a 2015 joint report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics)

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015072.pdf>

“Our nation’s schools should be safe havens for teaching and learning, free of crime and violence. Any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but also may disrupt the educational process and affect bystanders, the school itself, and the surrounding community.”

Some of the Key Findings from the Report

Preliminary data show that there were 45 school-associated violent deaths from July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012. In 2013, among students ages 12–18, there were about 1,420,900 nonfatal victimizations at school, which included 454,900 theft victimizations and 966,000 violent victimizations (simple assault and serious violent victimizations). Out of 791 total hate crimes reported on college campuses in 2012, the most common type of hate crime reported by institutions was destruction, damage, and vandalism (412 incidents), followed by intimidation (261 incidents), simple assault (79 incidents), aggravated assault (14 incidents), larceny (11 incidents), robbery (5 incidents), burglary (5 incidents), and forcible sex offenses (4 incidents).

- Between 1992 and 2013, the total victimization rates for students ages 12–18 generally declined both at and away from school.
- Between 1995 and 2013, the percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being victimized at school during the previous 6 months decreased overall (from 10 to 3 percent), as did the percentages of students who reported theft (from 7 to 2 percent), violent victimization (from 3 to 1 percent), and serious violent victimization (from 1 percent to less than one-half of 1 percent).
- The percentage of students in grades 9–12 who reported being in a physical fight anywhere decreased between 1993 and 2013 (from 42 to 25 percent), and the percentage of students in these grades who reported being in a physical fight on school property also decreased during this period (from 16 to 8 percent).
- In 2013, nearly all students ages 12–18 reported that they observed the use of at least one of the selected security measures at their schools. Most students ages 12–18 reported that their schools had a written code of student conduct and a requirement that visitors sign in (96 percent each). Approximately 90 percent of students reported the presence of school staff (other than security guards or assigned police officers) or other adults supervising the hallway, 77 percent reported the presence of one or more security cameras to monitor the school, and 76 percent reported locked entrance or exit doors during the day. Eleven percent of students reported the use of metal detectors at their schools, representing the least observed of the selected safety and security measures.

B. Violence Prevention and Safe Schools

Excerpts from: *Understanding School Violence* (a CDC 2015 Fact Sheet)

http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/School_Violence_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf

“School violence is youth violence that occurs on school property, on the way to or from school or school-sponsored events, or during a school-sponsored event. A young person can be a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness of school violence. School violence may also involve or impact adults.

Youth violence includes various behaviors. Some violent acts—such as bullying, pushing, and shoving—can cause more emotional harm than physical harm. Other forms of violence, such as gang violence and assault (with or without weapons), can lead to serious injury or even death. . . .

Deaths resulting from school violence are only part of the problem. Many young people experience nonfatal injuries. Some of these injuries are relatively minor and include cuts, bruises, and broken bones. Other injuries, like gunshot wounds and head trauma, are more serious and can lead to permanent disability.

Not all injuries are visible. Exposure to youth violence and school violence can lead to a wide array of negative health behaviors and outcomes, including alcohol and drug use and suicide. Depression, anxiety, and many other psychological problems, including fear, can result from school violence. . . .

The goal is to stop school violence from happening in the first place. Several prevention strategies have been identified.

- Universal, school-based prevention programs can significantly lower rates of aggression and violent behavior.³ These programs are delivered to all students in a school or grade level. They teach about various topics and develop skills, such as emotional self-awareness and control, positive social skills, problem solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork.
- Parent- and family-based programs can improve family relations and lower the risk for violence by children especially when the programs are started early.⁴ These programs provide parents with education about child development and teach skills to communicate and solve problems in nonviolent ways.
- Street outreach programs can significantly reduce youth violence.⁴ These programs connect trained staff with at-risk youth to conduct conflict mediation, make service referrals, and change beliefs about the acceptability of violence.”

For more from CDC, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention>

C. A Balanced Approach to Safe Schools

Excerpts from: *Position Statement of the Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence* (endorsed by 183 organizations and over 200 prevention scholars & practitioners) <http://curry.virginia.edu/articles/sandyhookshooting>

“Inclinations to intensify security in schools should be reconsidered. We cannot and should not turn our schools into fortresses. Effective prevention cannot wait until there is a gunman in a school parking lot. We need resources such as mental health supports and threat assessment teams in every school and community so that people can seek assistance when they recognize that someone is troubled and requires help. For communities, this speaks to a need for increased access to well integrated service structures across mental health, law enforcement, and related agencies. We must encourage people to seek help when they see that someone is embroiled in an intense, persistent conflict or is deeply troubled. If we can recognize and ameliorate these kinds of situations, then we will be more able to prevent violence.

These issues require attention at the school and community levels. We believe that research supports a thoughtful approach to safer schools, guided by four key elements: Balance, Communication, Connectedness, and Support, along with strengthened attention to mental health needs in the community, structured threat assessment approaches, revised policies on youth exposure to violent media, and increased efforts to limit inappropriate access to guns and especially, assault type weapons.

Balance – Communication – Connectedness – Support

A balanced approach implies well-integrated programs that make sense and are effective. Although it may be logical to control public entrances to a school, reliance on metal detectors, security cameras, guards, and entry check points is unlikely to provide protection against all school-related shootings, including the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary. Indeed, shootings have occurred in schools with strict security measures already in place. A balanced approach to preventing violence and protecting students includes a variety of efforts addressing physical safety, educational practices, and programs that support the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

Communication is critical. Comprehensive analyses by the U. S. Secret Service, the FBI, and numerous researchers have concluded that the most effective way to prevent many acts of violence targeted at schools is by maintaining close communication and trust with students and others in the community, so that threats will be reported and can be investigated by responsible authorities. Attempts to detect imminently violent individuals based on profiles or checklists of characteristics are ineffective and are most likely to result in false identification of innocent students or other individuals as being dangerous when they actually pose little or no threat. Instead, school authorities should concentrate their efforts on improving communication and training a team of staff members to use principles of threat assessment to take reasonable steps to resolve the problems and conflicts revealed through a threat investigation.

Concerned students, parents, educators, and stakeholders in the community should attend to troubling behaviors that signal something is amiss. For example, if a person utters threats to engage in a violent act or displays a pronounced change of mood and related social behavior, or is engaged in a severe conflict with family members or coworkers, it makes sense to communicate concerns to others who might provide assistance. Early identification is important not only to prevent violence, but to provide troubled individuals the support, treatment, and help they need.

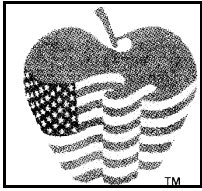
Schools and communities must find effective means to overcome any reluctance to break unwritten rules against “tattling” or “snitching” by communicating to all community members that their lives or the lives of their friends might depend on seeking help for troubled individuals before problems escalate. Channels of efficient, user-friendly communication need to be established and maintained, and can be facilitated when community members, students and staff members feel comfortable bringing concerns regarding safety to the attention of school administrators.

Connectedness refers to what binds us together as families, friends, and communities. All students need to feel that they belong at their school and that others care for them. Similarly, local neighborhoods and communities are better and safer places when neighbors look out for one another, are involved in community activities, and care about the welfare of each other. Research indicates that those students most at risk for delinquency and violence are often those who are most alienated from the school community. Schools need to reach out to build positive connections to marginalized students, showing concern, and fostering avenues of meaningful involvement.

Support is critical for effective prevention. Many students and family members experience life stresses and difficulties. Depression, anxiety, bullying, incivility, and various forms of conflict need to be taken seriously. Every school should create environments where students and adults feel emotionally safe and have the capacity to support one another. Schools must also have the resources to maintain evidence-based programs designed to address bullying and other forms of student conflict. Research-based violence prevention and related comprehensive support programs should be offered, following a three-tier approach, operating at universal (school-wide), targeted (for students who are at risk), and intensive (for students who are at the highest levels of risk and need) levels.”

WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE SAFE SCHOOLS

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=c2Nob29sc2FmZXR5LnVzfG5zc2N8Z3g6M2RkMzc5NWY3NjMwOGUzMg>



The *National School Safety Center* was created to help combat school safety problems so that schools can be free to focus on the primary job of educating our nation's children. *NSSC* was established by Presidential directive in 1984 as a partnership of the United States Departments of Justice and Education. *NSSC* is now a private, non-profit organization serving school administrators, teachers, law officers, community leaders, government officials and others interested in creating safe schools throughout the United States and internationally. For more information about our organization, products and services, go to www.schoolsafety.us

While most schools have existing safety programs, these programs often need conscientious, creative application to improve their effectiveness. Following is a list of ideas and activities that will work to create safer schools. Some of these suggestions may already be part of district or school site programs. Many of these ideas may be initiated and carried out by school-site principals or parents' groups working with local school administrators or by school district public relations directors, working cooperatively with school superintendents and other district administrators.

Perhaps the most important strategy is to place school safety on the educational agenda. This includes developing a safe schools plan - an ongoing process that encompasses the development of district-wide crime prevention policies, in-service training, crisis preparation, interagency cooperation and student/parent participation. An appointed task force should develop and implement the plan with representatives from all elements of the school community - board members, employees, students, parents, law enforcers, government and business leaders, the media and local residents.

The following ideas address school safety. They work toward achieving quality education and safer schools. Through such activities, schools can improve campus climate and discipline, as well as enlist participation from various groups to create partnerships in this important effort. Educators who take active roles and initiate positive programs -rather than just react when negative conditions arise - help create successful schools.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

Primary strategies to help inform, persuade, and integrate school safety and public opinion. These ideas will facilitate planning and the implementation of the remaining strategies.

- Place school Safety on the education agenda. Convince your school board, superintendent and principals that quality education requires safe, disciplined and peaceful schools. Stress the basic concept that school safety is a community concern requiring a community response. School administrators should facilitate and coordinate community efforts which promote safe schools.
- Develop a district-wide safe schools plan, as well as individual plans for each school in the system. Include systematic procedures for dealing with specific types of crises and ensuring the safety of students and school personnel.
- Develop a school safety clearinghouse for current literature and data on school safety issues. Key topics to include are school crime and violence, drugs, discipline, attendance and dropouts, vandalism, security, weapons, youth suicide, child abuse and school law.
- Establish a systematic, district-wide mandatory incident reporting system. The policy should include the development of a standard form to provide complete and consistent information on accidents, discipline problems, vandalism and security problems as well as suspected child abuse. After the policy and reporting form are developed, distribute them to all district personnel and monitor compliance.
- Prepare a school safety public information brochure. Briefly explain the important issues and the specific roles individuals and groups can play in developing schools that are safe havens for learning.
- Develop safety policies. Keep current with trends and exemplary programs in education, public relations and school safety. Make plans and implement them with authority and conviction. (Confidence and willingness to accept responsibility are persuasive qualities in the minds of district administrators and other school employees.)
- Develop and regularly update a school safety fact sheet for your district. Provide current statistics on incidents of crime and violence, disciplinary actions and suspensions, attendance and dropouts, and

vandalism and repair costs. Compare school crime and violence rates with crime rates of the local community. Use this data to inform and educate the public and media.

- Create a school safety advisory group. This advisory group should include representatives from all constituencies, especially law enforcers, judges, lawyers, health and human services professionals, parents and the media. Individuals should be able to articulate the desires of the groups they represent and relate advisory group actions back to their peers. Select members who can be relied upon for consistent, continued support and who seek solutions rather than recognition and status from their participation. Recruit group members with special qualifications, such as policy-making authority, access to the media, ability to mobilize volunteers or expertise in raising funds.
- Support America's Safe Schools Week. The third week (Sunday through Saturday) in October is designated each year as America's Safe Schools Week. This week is an appropriate time to initiate many school safety ideas.
- Develop and maintain a community resource file of people known for their abilities to shape public opinion and accomplish goals. Rely on advice from community leaders and the local media to develop a comprehensive list. Solicit the support of these individuals. Keep them informed about district news and issues, invite them to various school activities, and seek their involvement in the safe schools planning process.
- Build a public relations team, starting with school employees. The education of students is a business that must compete with other interests for public support. School employees are the best public relations people because they are inside authorities. Treat these people as important team players. Print business cards for all school employees. This is a simple and relatively inexpensive expression of the district's respect for its employees and their work. Honor meritorious service of school employees with special recognition days and awards. Nominate school principals, teachers and staff for recognition awards and programs sponsored by local groups or state and national associations and government agencies.
- Create a comprehensive identity program for your district. An institution's identity or image is, in many ways, a direct reflection of its administration, school employees and students. Develop a symbol to be used on all printed material. Special promotional items using this symbol can include shirts, hats, lapel pins, coffee mugs and bumper stickers. Award these items to teachers and staff, volunteer parents and students for exemplary work that has promoted a positive campus climate. A thoughtfully developed slogan can also have a positive effect on the public's perception of the district.
- Publish a district magazine or newsletter. Distribute it as widely as possible to board members, district employees, parents, students, community residents, business and civic leaders, local government officials and the media. The content should be balanced, with specific district news and special features on topical education issues. Distinguish the publication with a name, not a generic title such as "bulletin" or "newsletter." Readers are more inclined to relate to a publication if aided by a mental association between the title and the contents. Additionally, it is important to take the advice of the advertising industry and package your product as attractively as possible to encourage the public to examine the contents.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES

There is no foolproof menu of "perfect strategies" for safe schools. However, these additional suggestions can provide some working ideas for the development of your individualized "Safe School Plan." They can assist you in working with school board members, school employees, students, parents, community residents (including senior citizens), service groups, business leaders, government representatives, law enforcers and media representatives. School safety is about community will. It is about adapting strategies to fit your needs as opposed to simply adopting someone else's program.

WORKING WITH SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Board of education members need to "buy into" the importance of public support for school safety.

- Place board members at the top of your mailing list. Include them in school safety programs and initiatives. Ensure that they receive copies of every internally and externally distributed communication: the district magazine, student newsletters, events calendars, teacher memorandums, parent notices, activity announcements, news releases and letters of commendation. For especially significant or controversial issues, see that board members receive advance copies of materials.

- Invite board members to visit school sites regularly. Vary the itinerary for a comprehensive look; include lunch with students and staff. This personal contact helps break down barriers and stereotypes.
- Add school safety to the education mission of the school district. A phrase which states that: "It is the goal of (ABC Public Schools) to provide a safe, welcoming and secure environment for all children and those professionals who serve them," is an excellent beginning. Such a statement then allows the school district to develop a series of supporting policies related to safe, welcoming and secure schools.

WORKING WITH SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Often school employees are the only contacts community residents have with a school. As inside authorities, employees' attitudes and opinions carry a great deal of weight locally. Consistent district communication can minimize internal conflict and promote teamwork. Take the time to circulate among school employees, asking for advice based on their firsthand experiences.

- Coordinate school safety workshops that outline the relationship of school safety to quality education and emphasize the need for public support of schools. Educate employees about their specific safety responsibilities. Invite law enforcers, lawyers, judges, health and human services officials, and probation officers to teach about the juvenile justice system and its relationship to effective schools.
- Sponsor classroom management seminars. Use actual case studies, such as student misbehavior problems from local schools, as part of the training. This helps teachers identify more readily with such situations and mitigates an attitude of "that doesn't happen here."
- Encourage teachers to contact parents regularly to inform them about the good things students are doing. Develop a system to enable teachers to call or write parents routinely and conveniently. Provide space and time for teachers to meet regularly with parents at school and recommend that teachers initiate these informal meetings as frequently as possible. Monitor the participation.
- Incorporate safety topics into the curriculum. For instance, social studies or civics classes can discuss Gallup's annual poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools; physical education courses can include instruction on physical safety; chemistry classes can examine the negative effects of drugs on the human body; English classes can correlate literature study with essays on self-esteem, character-building or student misbehavior; and graphics classes can promote safer campuses by designing posters featuring effective safety messages.
- Develop a policy, form or box for suggestions to improve campus climate. Respond to all messages promptly and, when appropriate, personally thank the individual who offered the advice. Include retired school employees on the publication's mailing list. These individuals often can be a school's most vocal supporters and active volunteers.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Students are both causes and victims of much of the crime and misbehavior on campuses. Most of the following ideas and activities require initiation by administrators and teachers. Once students experience the positive results of the activities, however, they likely will assume the responsibility the maintaining such activities.

- Initiate programs to promote student responsibility for safer schools. Create a "student leader" group consisting of leaders from all formal and informal campus groups. Assist this representative group in modeling and encouraging school safety activities among their peers. Student government representatives can also form a student safety committee to identify safety problems and solutions.
- Encourage student input in district policy. Appoint one or more student representatives to the school board. These students would participate in discussions and planning but not be voting members.
- Create and publicize safety incentive programs that share a percentage of the district's savings with schools if vandalism is reduced. Such programs encourage students to take responsibility for vandalism prevention. Often students are allowed to help decide what projects to help fund.
- Coordinate student courts. Student judges, lawyers, jurors, bailiffs and court clerks, trained by local justice system experts, hear and try cases involving fellow students. Student courts make real judgments and pass real sentences.

- Purchase conflict resolution curricular materials that will provide staff and student training in solving problems and conflicts. Enlist student mediators to calm tensions among classmates and to provide a positive influence on school climate.
- Establish local branches of student safety groups, such as SADD (Students Against Drinking Drunk) and Arrive Alive, which sponsor alcohol-free social activities. Consider promoting student and parent groups that provide rides home to teenagers who have been drinking.
- Develop a "buddy system." Assign current students to newcomers to facilitate easy transitions. Assign older, bigger students to look out for students who seem to be bullied by others.
- Plan a community beautification campaign for the school and neighborhood using students as a work crew. Graffiti and vandalized areas should be priorities. With professional guidance, students can help maintain campuses, parks and other community areas. Beautification projects enhance the appearance of the community and develop a strong sense of pride among participants.
- Consider establishing a student tip line which provides an anonymous, non-threatening way for young people to report school crime.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

In Discipline: A Parent's Guide, the National PTA identifies parents' main responsibility., Set a good example. Children learn more by parents' actions than from parents' words. Parental pride and involvement in the school sets a positive example for children.

- Make time for any parent who wants to meet. Treat visiting parents as colleagues in the business of educating children. Always listen before talking - parents often just need to be heard. Try to conclude sessions with a commitment of support from parents.
- Develop a parent-on-campus policy that makes it convenient and comfortable for parents to visit the school. Get the program off the ground by inviting an initial group of parent participants who can spread the word. Initiate breakfast or lunch clubs for working parents. Flexible meeting times will accommodate working parents.
- Develop a receptive, systematic policy regarding meeting with parents. Many parents are concerned about their children's educational progress and safety, about school policies and programs, and about taking a proactive part in bettering the school climate. Ensure that parents are treated with respect and courtesy as colleagues in the education and development of their children.
- Call parents at home or even at work to congratulate them on a child's special achievement or to thank them for support on a special project. Write short letters of appreciation or thank-you notes.
- Help establish a policy in which parents become financially liable for damage done by their children. Parents and children need to be made aware of the serious consequences for criminal actions. (This already is state law in many parts of the country.)

WORKING WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS

Just as communities work together to prevent crime with "Neighborhood Watch" programs, local residents can mobilize to make schools safer. Such mobilization efforts target community residents without school-aged children. It is essential to communicate to this critical group that they do have direct as well as indirect relationships to local schools. Public opinion polls suggest that the more citizens are involved in schools, the more likely people are to have a favorable opinion of schools.

- Hold a series of briefings for community residents to inform them about school problems directly affecting the neighborhood. Property values decline when neighborhood schools have poor reputations and surrounding areas suffer from vandalism, crime by truants and drug trafficking. Form "School Watch" programs in which neighbors around the school are asked to watch for and report suspicious activities to school or law enforcement officials. Post signs on the school grounds: "This school is protected by a neighborhood School Watch." Solicit advice from community residents and conduct follow-up meetings to keep community representatives updated on progress.

- Start a "Safe House" program that recruits responsible community residents. Children learn that homes posting

"Safe House" signs are safe places to go if they are in danger or need assistance. Volunteers need to be closely screened before they are accepted as participants.

- Use outdoor posters or school marquees to announce school events to area residents; invite their participation or attendance. Roadside signs declaring, "A community is known by the schools it keeps," also have been used to stimulate community partnerships.
- Recruit parents, community residents without school-aged children, retired teachers and senior citizens to form a welcoming committee to greet new residents. Enlist volunteer's to provide information, answer questions about school activities, encourage participation and prepare school activity packets for distribution.
- Use school facilities to offer adult education classes and health clinics. Course topics can range from arts and crafts to exercise and aerobics to income tax preparation. These Classes are beneficial to community residents and integrate them into the school community. Encourage senior citizens to participate in such activities. Time and experience are prized assets in all public relations planning, and senior citizens are often able to supply those two commodities. The most important outgrowth of such enlistment is the development of mutual respect and appreciation among students, school personnel and seniors.
- Recruit senior citizens in your community to participate at local schools. Arrange for seniors to make school presentations to history classes about public attitudes and "firsthand" experiences during significant times in our country's history. Small group discussions, facilitated by senior volunteers, can be especially educational. Seniors can also participate as teacher or staff aides, student advisors, mentors and tutors, special activity organizers, playground supervisors and dance chaperones.
- Issue "Golden Apple Cards" to senior volunteers who work on school projects. The cards could allow free or reduced-price admission to school programs such as musical concerts, plays or athletic events.
- Help integrate students and senior citizens by arranging for students to visit senior centers, convalescent centers or retirement homes. Students can present plays and musical programs; home economic classes can prepare special meals; art classes can decorate the facilities; and engineering or shop classes can make small repairs. Younger children particularly can add a great deal of joy with regular visits to seniors. Some school groups may wish to participate in "adopt-a-grand parent" programs.

WORKING WITH SERVICE GROUPS

Most communities have dozens of service, civic, religious and other special-interest groups. Each organization's headquarters or the president's address should be included on the mailing list to regularly receive the district magazine and other important announcements and publications.

- Use school facilities and available resources to help youth groups such as scouting or Camp Fire troops, boys' and girls' clubs, YMCA and YWCA, 4-H, Red Cross youth programs and youth sports clubs. Schools should make every effort to foster continuing relationships with the groups, families and individuals who support schools and use school facilities and resources. Establish an advisory council of representatives from all the groups to coordinate needs and resources and plan future joint ventures.
- Encourage the participation of clergy in the development of citizenship education programs. Character, respect and self-discipline are appropriate topics for both sermons and classroom lectures. Consider organizing a representative group of parents, educators and religious leaders to develop a booklet that discusses these issues.
- Use service group newsletters to inform members about special school programs. Submit filler, including student essays and art, to editors. Use these forums to encourage school volunteerism as part of public service work.

WORKING WITH BUSINESS LEADERS

The business community is a natural partner for local schools. Businesses have an immediate vested interest in good schools: quality education for children of their employees. Businesses also have a long-range interest: a well-trained work force. The quality of life and the quality of education in the community are inseparable. The following ideas are suggested to take advantage of this vested interest. The logical way to start business partnerships is to meet with representatives from the local chamber of commerce and labor unions.

- Arrange regular presentations by business leaders to students, teachers and parents. Professional, practical advice is invaluable in describing various professions and career opportunities. Coordinate career days where business leaders participate in seminars, distribute information packets and present demonstrations. Coordinate field trips to business offices and production plants. Witnessing the practical application of skills can make students more appreciative and understanding of classroom instruction.

- Promote "adopt-a-school" programs. This trend in school business partnerships unites a business with a school needing resources the business can donate, such as equipment or excess supplies. Businesses can provide company or staff services, such as bookkeeping, transportation, building repairs, maintenance and professional instruction on computers or other equipment.
- Develop a qualified student employment pool. Work with business leaders to develop the criteria for a desirable employee. Closely screen applicants for the pool based on the qualifications requested by prospective employers. Advertise the availability of this conscientious, willing work force to local businesses.
- Help realtors "sell" your schools. Quality schools are a high priority with prospective home buyers. Work with real estate agents, brokers and boards to promote the positive qualities of your schools. Create a special task force to address problems such as vandalism, graffiti, loitering students, unkempt school grounds or even low test scores. General information and training seminars, which explain how real estate personnel can "sell" schools, can be added to regular office and real estate board meetings.
- Solicit support from local businesses patronized by students and their parents. Develop a marketing strategy that provides discounts to students and parents and that simultaneously promotes local businesses' products or services. Retail outlets of all kinds, including gas stations, can benefit from such promotions.
- Trade advertising space in your district magazine for "in-kind" services. This often is a valuable "foot in the door" with future major donors.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Unanimous political support the quality education presents schools with a variety of opportunities. Many federal, state and local agencies and officials provide resources and services that can be helpful to schools. Identify the key government officials and political representatives in your area and add their names to your mailing list. At the same time, start a File on materials, resources and services they have to offer. Learn their primary interests in schools and explore means to effectively integrate those interests with your needs. If top policymakers are not easily accessible, request that they assign a regular contact person to work with you.

- Establish a school district orientation plan for newly elected government representatives. By initiating these relationships, you enhance opportunities for future access. Offer to compile data needed by government officials to • support education proposals and provide lawmakers with the implications of particular legislation from a practitioners point of view.
- Routinely invite your government representatives to school functions. Always recognize them formally when they attend. Give elected representatives advance warning if the audience's attitudes may create or reflect conflict. Although you may disagree with officials over policies, as fellow public servants, your professional courtesy will be appreciated.
- Ask government officials to sponsor student government days. Consider teaming government representatives with students to propose solutions to real problems faced by students and schools, including drug abuse, dropouts, vandalism, personal safety, and fiscal and social problems.

WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCERS

Law enforcers and school personnel represent highly trained professionals who have the welfare of the students and school community in mind. Annual planning sessions and monthly meetings with law enforcement representatives, district administrators and school employees can provide the opportunity for reciprocal briefings on safety issues and prevention and intervention strategies.

- Request a risk management or safety assessment of your schools by local law enforcement agency personnel. This procedure will validate safety concerns and help establish response strategies.
- Create a "Joint Power Agreement" or "Memorandum of Understanding" as to how the school and local law enforcement agencies will work together in terms of handling a crisis or campus disruptions. The agreement should cover such aspects as reciprocal crime reporting, procedures for handling rumors and threats, crisis prevention and response.
- Establish an "Officer Friendly" program at your schools. Invite local law enforcers to make presentations to students on child safety, drug abuse prevention, and juvenile justice practices and policies. Visiting law enforcers can demonstrate tools of their trade, including trained police dogs, breathalyzers and emergency vehicles. When students become comfortable in relating to law enforcers, students learn to further appreciate both the officers and the laws they enforce.

- Coordinate student and staff "ride-along" programs. The one-on-one time with officers on patrol is an effective means for law enforcers to gain respect and inspire confidence.
- Work with law enforcers and parents to fingerprint young children as a safety measure. Fingerprinting is usually done at a school site by law enforcers. The prints then are given to the parent or guardian.
- Pair law enforcer's with high-risk youths, similar to the "Big Brother' program. Such relationships can be an important step in changing delinquent behavior patterns.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Tapping existing channels of communication is perhaps the most efficient means of information dissemination. The media are considered "independent," objective sources of information. Consequently, a school issue reported by the media is likely to have considerably more impact on public attitudes than the same message presented in the district magazine or delivered by the district administration. Do not argue with those who incorrectly report or quote information. Take a positive approach. Contact the media outlet and provide the corrected account. Often the media will update the report or offer a retraction. Even if this does not occur, the contact may make the reporter more careful to be accurate with your material in the future.

- Learn all you can about the media's needs, operations, deadlines, services, and particularly the reporter and editor who cover school news and receive district news releases and advances. Know the deadlines - release stories so all or most of the media Will get them at the same time.
- Encourage the media to support school events and issues. Propose feature or documentary topics of potential viewer or reader interest that also promote schools. Extend an open invitation for media staff to visit the schools and learn about programs.
- Send public service announcements to the media. Learn what public service directors want and submit announcements appropriate to those needs, including camera-ready art for print media; 10-, 20- or 30-second spots for radio (submitted on paper or prerecorded); or slides, copy or background information for television. Often TV and radio stations will work with local public service institutions to produce original announcements. Give this option serious consideration, because when jointly produced, public service announcements are virtually guaranteed regular broadcast placements, and costs are reduced to little or nothing.
- Solicit free or discounted copies of daily newspapers. Encourage teachers to incorporate news coverage into English, civics and social studies courses.

While considering these ideas, it is important to remember two things. First, what works is good public relations. Second, what does not work is not necessarily bad public relations. Undoubtedly, there are dozens of other strategies and positive options that will emerge out of safe school planning. It is our hope that these suggested strategies will spark additional ideas that promote the safety and success of all children.

Excerpted in part from **Educated Public Relations: School Safety 101**,
published by the National School Safety Center.

E. Assessing School Safety as a Facet of School Climate

School safety is a critical facet of school climate, but to appropriately address this concern, it is essential to evaluate it in the context of overall school climate. As discussed in our Center's documents, climate is a key concept in planning to enhance the quality of school life, teaching, learning, and support (e.g., see

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/schoolclassroomclimate.pdf>).

School and classroom climate sometimes are referred to as the learning environment or the supportive learning environment, as well as by terms such as atmosphere, ambience, ecology, milieu, conditions for learning. (Note: Sometimes the terms climate and culture are used interchangeably, but the concepts are not the same.)

School and classroom climate influences classroom behavior and learning. The impact on students and staff can be beneficial or another barrier to learning and teaching. Understanding the nature of school climate is a basic element in improving schools. Implied is the intent to establish and maintain a positive context that facilitates classroom learning. In practice, school and classroom climates range from hostile or toxic to welcoming and supportive and can fluctuate daily and over the school year.

School and classroom climate are temporal, and somewhat fluid, perceived qualities of the immediate setting which emerge from the complex transaction of many factors. In turn, the climate reflects the influence of the underlying, institutionalized values and belief systems, norms, ideologies, rituals, and traditions that constitute the school culture. And, of course, the climate and culture at a school are affected by the surrounding political, social, cultural, and economic contexts (e.g., home, neighborhood, city, state, country).

Prevailing approaches to measuring school and classroom climate use (1) teacher and student perceptions, (2) external observer's ratings and systematic coding, and/or (3) naturalistic inquiry, ethnography, case study, and interpretative assessment techniques. Because the concept is a psychological construct, climate in a given school and classroom can be perceived differently by observers. With this in mind, some measures of school climate (including school safety) focus on the shared perceptions of those in the school.

Two Examples of Surveys

(1) The National School Climate Council recommends that school climate assessments focus on four dimensions: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the institutional environment – using surveys that encompass the perceptions of students parents and guardians, and school personnel (see <http://schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php>).

(2) The California Department of Education (CDE) commissioned the development of the online, web-based California School Climate Survey (CSCS). The survey is being used by schools throughout the nation, and is required by the federal government of participants in the national evaluation of the Safe Schools Healthy Students program. This short survey is designed to confidentially obtain staff perceptions about learning and teaching conditions for both general and special education, in order to regularly inform decisions about professional development, instruction, the implementation of learning supports, and school reform. It can also be customized with additional questions to meet a school's specific needs. Underlying the survey is research and theory supporting the importance of fostering school environments that are academically challenging, caring, participatory, safe, and healthy (see <http://cscs.wested.org/administer/download>).

Prevention Strategies to Ensure Safe Schools

A. Guidelines for Effective Intervention

- How can we Intervene Effectively?
- School Violence Prevention
- Elements of an Effective Prevention Program
- Principles and Tools for Planning for Emergencies
- Youth Violence: Risk and Protective Factors
- Involving parents in violence prevention efforts
- Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Model Fact Sheet

B. Programs

- Blueprints for Violence Prevention
- SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence Based Program & Practice
- The Effectiveness of Universal School-Based Program for the Practice of Violent and Aggressive Behavior
- Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents
- Anti-Bias and Conflict Resolution Curricula: Theory and Practice
- Examples of a Few Other Programs for Safe Schools and Communities
- Safe, Drug-Free, and Effective Schools for ALL students: What Works!!!





A. Guidelines for Effective Intervention

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- **Safe Communities ~ Safe Schools Model Fact Sheet**

How Can We Intervene Effectively?

A Chapter from a Report of the
American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, Vol. I

The urgent need to prevent further destruction of young lives by violence has led to a proliferation of antiviolen interventions for children, youth, and their families. Many of these interventions were created primarily for service delivery, without scientific underpinnings or plans for outcome evaluation. Some are targeted at perpetrators of violence, others at their victims, and still others at bystanders who may play a pivotal role in condoning or preventing violence. Some are preventive, and others seek to ameliorate the damage already done. Some are targeted toward changing individuals, and others seek to change the systems and settings that influence behavior, such as the family, peers, schools, and community.

Those programs that have been evaluated and show promise include **interventions aimed at reducing risk factors or at strengthening families and children to help them resist the effects of detrimental life circumstances**. Few programs, however, have been designed to evaluate the direct short-term and long-term effects of intervention on rates of violence; most concentrate instead on assessing the program's effects on risk factors or mediators of violence. Many potentially effective psychological interventions have been developed and are currently being investigated, but most have been too recently implemented to have appropriately long-term evaluation data to judge their effects on rates of violence.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Effective intervention programs share two primary characteristics: (a) they draw on the understanding of developmental and sociocultural risk factors leading to antisocial behavior,- and (b) they use theory-based intervention strategies with known efficacy in changing behavior, tested program designs, and validated, objective measurement techniques to assess outcomes. Other key criteria that describe the most promising intervention approaches include:

They begin as early as possible to interrupt the "trajectory toward violence." Evidence indicates that intervention early in childhood can reduce aggressive and antisocial behavior and can also affect certain risk factors associated with antisocial behavior, such as low educational achievement and inconsistent parenting practices. A few studies have included 10- to 20-year follow-up data that suggest these positive effects may endure. Some of the most promising programs are interventions designed to assist and educate families who are at risk before a child is even born.

They address aggression as part of a constellation of antisocial behaviors in the child or youth. Aggression usually is just one of a number of problem behaviors found in the aggressive child. Often the cluster includes academic difficulties, poor interpersonal relations, cognitive deficits, and attributional biases.

They include multiple components that reinforce each other across the child's everyday social contexts: family, school, peer groups, media, and community. Aggressive behavior tends to be consistent across social domains. For this reason, multimodal interventions that use techniques known to affect behavior and that can be implemented in complementary ways across social domains are needed to produce enduring effects.

They take advantage of developmental "windows of opportunity": points at which interventions are especially needed or especially likely to make a difference. Such windows of opportunity include transitions in children's lives: birth, entry into preschool, the beginning of elementary school, and adolescence. The developmental challenges of adolescence are a particular window of opportunity, because the limits-testing and other age-appropriate behaviors of adolescents tend to challenge even a functional family's well-developed patterns of interaction. Also, antisocial behaviors tend to peak during adolescence, and many adolescents engage in sporadic aggression or antisocial behavior. Programs that prepare children to navigate the developmental crises of adolescence may help prevent violence by and toward the adolescents

PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Prevention programs directed early in life can reduce factors that increase risk for antisocial behavior and clinical dysfunction in childhood and adolescence. Among the most promising of these interventions are:

"Home visitor" programs for at-risk families, which include prenatal and postnatal counseling and continued contact with family and child in the first few years of life. In a 20-year follow-up of one such program, positive effects could be seen both for the at-risk child and for the mother.

Preschool programs that address diverse intellectual, emotional, and social needs and the development of cognitive and decision-making processes.

Although these results indicate improvements in factors that have been associated with violence, there is no way to tell from the findings if the programs actually had an effect on the incidence of violence. Only when outcome measures include an assessment of the frequency of violent behaviors can we determine the validity of these or any programs as violence-prevention efforts.

School-based primary prevention programs for children and adolescents are effective with children and youth who are not seriously violence-prone, but these programs have not yet been demonstrated to have major effects on seriously and persistently aggressive youth. Evaluations of such school-based programs show they can improve prosocial competence and reduce at-risk behavior among youth who are not seriously violence-prone by promoting nonviolent norms, lessening the opportunity for and elicitation of violent acts, and preventing the sporadic violence that emerges temporarily during adolescence. The programs teach youth how to cope better with the transitional crises of adolescence and offer them behavioral alternatives and institutional constraints to keep sporadic aggressiveness within socially defined bounds.

Primary prevention programs of the type that promote social and cognitive skills seem to have the greatest impact on attitudes about violent behavior among children and youth. Skiffs that aid children in learning alternatives to violent behaviors include social perspective-taking, alternative solution generation, self-esteem enhancement, peer negotiation skills, problem-solving skills training, and anger management.

SECONDARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-RISK CHILDREN

Secondary prevention programs that focus on improving individual affective, cognitive, and behavioral skills or on modifying the learning conditions for aggression offer promise of interrupting the path toward violence for high-risk or predelinquent youth. To the extent that development is an ongoing process, programs that target learning contexts, such as the family, should produce the most enduring effects. On the other hand, programs for youth already showing aggressive behavior have not been successful when the programs are unfocused and not based on sound theory. Furthermore, because most interventions have been relatively brief and have emphasized psychoeducational interventions, it is not known whether they would be effective with seriously aggressive or delinquent youth.

Programs that attempt to work with and modify the family system of a high-risk child have great potential to prevent development of aggressive and violent behavior. A growing psychological literature confirms that family variables are important in the development and treatment of antisocial and violent behavior. For example, in a study of adolescents referred to juvenile court for minor infractions, an intervention that used a family-therapy approach to identify maladaptive family interaction patterns and provide instruction for remedial family management skills was successful in reducing recidivism rates and improving family interactions for up to 18 months after treatment. Sibling delinquency rates also were reduced.

Interventions that aim to prevent or treat violence within the family have been shown to be of great value in preventing the social transmission of violence. Modes of transmission within the family may include direct victimization and witnessing abuse of other family members. Both the parent-perpetrators of child abuse and the child-victims require treatment to change the current situation and to help avert long-term negative consequences for the victim and for the family. Physical abuse of children and adolescents, and other patterns of domestic violence, may be effectively treated with family-centered approaches to intervention.

Interventions to prevent and treat sexual violence by and against children and adolescents are of critical importance because of the potential long-term effects of such victimization. Victims of sexual violence are at increased risk for future victimization and may develop a constellation of problems ranging from low self-esteem to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Many programs have been created to prevent sexual victimization (e.g., "good touch/bad touch" programs for young children). Although these programs have been shown to affect children's knowledge, awareness, and skills, little is known about whether they actually affect the child's behavior in an abuse incident or not.

Individual treatment that involves the parents (or the nonoffending parent, if the sexual violence is intrafamilial) and includes behavioral techniques is one approach that has been found to be effective for children with PTSD symptoms.

Youthful offenders are highly likely to reoffend if they go untreated, whereas treatment with multimodal approaches (i.e., addressing deficits in cognitive processes, family relations, school performance, and peer relations) has shown great promise in reducing the rate of recidivism for both sexual and nonsexual offenses among these youth.

The concept of "diversion programs" to keep high-risk or predelinquent youth out of the juvenile justice system has great merit, and there is evidence that diversion programs with strong grounding in psychological theory can have a positive effect on recidivism rates. In one such intervention, youth 12 to 16 years old who had been referred to juvenile court were diverted to a program in which each had close contact with a trained volunteer 6 to 8 hours per week for 18 weeks. The intervention included behavioral contracting, child advocacy, help to obtain access to community resources, and involvement in the community. The contacts between the student volunteer and the youth took place in the youth's home, recreational settings, or other convenient locales. Carefully controlled and large-scale evaluations of the diversion program have shown that the intervention reduced recidivism among participants up to 2 years after the point of intake. Diversion programs are favored in many jurisdictions because the crowded, poorly supervised conditions of many juvenile facilities expose predelinquent youth who are referred to the courts for minor infractions to more experienced and violent youth, putting them at risk for victimization and potentially socializing them to adopt a criminal trajectory. In most jurisdictions, however, the diversion programs do not have scientific grounding and encompass little more than vaguely formulated counseling programs; the overall effectiveness of such programs has not been demonstrated.

TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Several promising techniques have been identified for treating children who already have adopted aggressive patterns of behavior. These include problem-solving skills training for the child, child management training for the parents (e.g., anger control, negotiation, and positive reinforcement), family therapy, and interventions at school or in the community.

For youth who have already shown seriously aggressive and violent behavior, sustained, multimodal treatment appears to be the most effective. Such psychological treatment consists of carefully designed and coordinated components involving school, parents, teachers, peers, and community, often coordinated around family intervention. By the time youth with antisocial behavior are referred clinically, their dysfunction often is pervasive and severe, and multiple counterinfluences need to be brought to bear to achieve significant impact. Research has demonstrated that adolescents with aggressive, antisocial, or delinquent behavior can improve with such treatment. Although long-term outcome data are not available, existing data show the improvements are maintained at least up to 1 year.

Interventions with gang members, a small but significant number of whom are among the most seriously violent and aggressive youth, also must be multimodal, sustained, and coordinated. Such interventions should combine and coordinate current and past approaches to intervening with gang youth, including social control methods (i.e., surveillance, incarceration, probation), "gang work" methods (i.e., building relationships between gang members and social workers who help gang members abandon delinquency and adopt conventional ways of behavior), and "opportunities provision" methods (i.e., jobs programs, educational development). Because ethnic minorities make up a large proportion of gangs and gang membership, the importance of cultural sensitivity in these gang interventions cannot be overemphasized.

SOCIETAL INTERVENTIONS

The partnership between police and community represented by community policing may play a pivotal role in reducing youth violence. Although the effect of community policing on youth violence has not been evaluated, community policing is believed to have great potential, making the officer's role one of preventing problems, not just responding to them.

Interventions can mitigate the impact of children's continued and growing exposure to violence in the media. Some successful or promising approaches include:

Empowering parents to monitor their child's viewing;

Helping children build "critical viewing skills" or develop attitudes that viewing violence in the media can be harmful;

Working with the Federal Communications Commission to limit the amount of dramatized violence available for viewing by children during the "child viewing hours" of 6 am and 10 pm; and

Working with the media to better inform and educate children in strategies for reducing or preventing their involvement with violence.

DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

Intervention programs should be carefully designed to fit the specific needs of the target group. Program design must take into account significant differentiating factors identified in psychological research as relevant to an intervention's success. Chief among these factors is the need for interventions to be linguistically appropriate and consonant with the cultural values, traditions, and beliefs associated with the specific ethnic and cultural groups making up the target audience. The gender, age, and developmental characteristics of participants are other factors that must be carefully considered in the design of any intervention.

Improvements in evaluation techniques have been a major contributing factor in the development of scientific approaches to antiviolence interventions with children and adolescents. Evaluations identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of an intervention and the direction of the effects. In addition, programs vary in their breadth of impact, and it is critically important to document whether or not an intervention has a broad impact (e.g., across multiple social domains, multiple problem behaviors, or both) or a more focused impact (e.g., altering use of one substance but not others and improving social competence but not altering at-risk behaviors).

In addition to evaluation's role in identifying promising interventions, an important reason for evaluating programs is that even well-designed programs may have no effect or, occasionally, adverse outcomes. Programs may be ineffective for a variety of reasons, such as poor staff training, weak interventions (i.e., interventions unlikely to affect behavior, such as information and education materials only), lack of cultural sensitivity, departures from the intended procedures while the interventions are still in effect, and lack of administrative support. In addition, the potential for iatrogenic (treatment-caused) effects must also be acknowledged in psychosocial interventions.

SOCIETAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF INTERVENTIONS

The success of intervention efforts may be limited if society continues to accept violence and aggression in certain contexts or continues to view violence and aggression as reasonable responses in certain circumstances. Public and professional education about social influences on violent behavior is essential. Although there is ample evidence to show that a number of social experiences are related to the development of violence, there is as yet no general agreement in the society as a whole on the relative importance of these factors and on what to do about them. These factors include:

Corporal punishment of children, because harsh and continual punishment has been implicated as a contributor to child aggression;

Violence on television and in other media, which is known to affect children's attitudes and behaviors in relation to violence; and

Availability of firearms, especially to children and youth. Firearms are known to increase the lethality of violence and encourage its escalation.

The potential success of antiviolence interventions may be limited by the social and economic contexts in which some Americans spend their lives. These macrosocial considerations are beyond the scope of psychological interventions and require a society-wide effort to change. They include:

Poverty, social and economic inequality, and the contextual factors that derive from these condition (i.e., living in crowded housing and lack of opportunity to ameliorate one's life circumstances), which are significant risk factors for involvement in violence;

Prejudice and racism, particularly because strongly prejudiced attitudes about particular social or cultural groups, or being a member of a group subjected to prejudice and discrimination, is a known risk factor for involvement in violence;

Misunderstanding of cultural differences, which must be addressed in intervention planning.

School Violence Prevention

From CDC's website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/prevention.html>

School violence can be prevented. Research shows that prevention efforts – by teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and even students – can reduce violence and improve the overall school environment. No one factor in isolation causes school violence, so stopping school violence involves using multiple prevention strategies that address the many individual, relationship, community, and societal factors that influence the likelihood of violence. Prevention efforts should ultimately reduce risk factors and promote protective factors at these multiple levels of influence.

Discussions about school violence rarely include public health's proven prevention approaches. Public health approaches focus on preventing violence before it starts and have been shown to effectively reduce school and youth violence. This known effectiveness stands in contrast to commonly used prevention strategies, such as metal detectors and other security measures, for which there is insufficient data to determine their benefits and some evidence to suggest that they may negatively impact students' perceptions of safety.¹ Public health offers knowledge and experience in preventing school violence that can significantly enhance approaches to end school violence.

Individual Level Strategies

Youth's experiences, knowledge, and skills can influence their likelihood of becoming involved in violence. Strengthening young people's abilities to effectively solve difficulties that arise and their opportunities to participate in prosocial activities can significantly reduce the risk for violence. One strategy for addressing these individual risks are universal, school-based violence prevention programs, which have been proven to reduce rates of aggression and violent behavior among students.² These programs are delivered to all students in a school or a particular grade and focus on many areas, including emotional self-awareness, emotional control, self-esteem, positive social skills, social problem-solving, conflict resolution, and teamwork.

Relationship Level Strategies

School busesPositive relationships between students and their prosocial peers, teachers, and families can be critical assets in promoting youth's well-being and preventing school violence. Several strategies to enhance these relationships have been found to be effective in reducing violence.³ For instance, many universal, school-based violence prevention programs improve students' social skills and problem-solving abilities, which can result in more positive peer and student-teacher relationships throughout the school. Some school-based programs also help students know how to appropriately and safely intervene to stop an escalating violent episode between peers.

Many school-based programs and policies are also effective in helping teachers build healthy relationships, model nonviolent attitudes and behaviors, and contribute to a broader positive school climate, which in turn lowers the risk for school violence.³ These approaches teach educators effective ways to manage a classroom, resolve conflicts nonviolently, promote positive relationships between students with diverse backgrounds, and create positive student-teacher relationships so that students feel comfortable talking with teachers about violence-related issues.

Finally, by enhancing parent involvement in both academic and social aspects of their children's school experiences - including involving parents in prevention programs - family cohesion and communication are improved. Prevention approaches that involve the family,

especially those that start early, can have substantial, long-term effects in reducing violent behavior.³

Community Level Strategies

The social environment of schools can influence the likelihood of violence. Schools can take numerous steps to improve school connectedness in order to promote learning and to reduce negative outcomes, such as violence.⁴ These include supporting effective classroom management practices, promoting cooperative learning techniques, providing educators with training and support to better meet the diverse needs of students, providing opportunities to actively engage families, and creating open communication and decision-making processes.

In addition to the social environment of a school, research suggests that the physical environment can influence fear and safety.⁵ Physical features of the school environment that could reduce violence include increasing natural surveillance, such as having windows at entrances and low or no shrubbery that does not block visibility, and effectively managing access to the building with well-marked entrances and exits that are continually monitored. Other strategies include creating a warm and welcoming environment with prominently displayed student artwork and the school's mascot/logo and by maintaining the building and parking areas by removing graffiti and making sure areas are well-lighted.

The characteristics of the community surrounding schools also influence the likelihood of school violence. By making changes in communities, school violence can decrease. Some effective community level strategies include providing youth with more structured and supervised afterschool opportunities, such as mentoring programs or recreational activities, in order to increase monitoring and healthy skill development of youth.³

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Elements of an Effective Prevention Program (continued)

The Agency

3. The program is supported within the agency.
 - a. Prevention is recognized as an integral component of the agency's overall program.
 - b. Program and staff have the support of the immediate supervisor.
 - c. Program and staff have the support of the director.
 - d. Program and staff have the support of the board.
 - e. Program and staff have the acceptance of agency staff.
 - f. The staff reports routinely on the program to the director.
 - g. The staff reports periodically on the program to the board.
4. The program enhances the agency's position in the community; represents good PR.

The Program/Intervention

5. The program changes systems/environments as well as individuals.
6. The service model is soundly based on research, theory and experience.
7. The program can be replicated easily.
 - a. The mission, the expected outcomes and the intervention steps are clear.
 - b. There is a manual or audio/visual materials available for training.

The Service Delivery

8. The intervention is reality-based.
 - a. The intervention recognizes that physical/survival needs must be met before skills can be learned or behavior changed.
 - b. The child is served in the context of his/her family and surroundings.
 - c. The program is flexible in responding to population's needs and is not limited by tradition practices or structures.
9. The recruitment is accomplished with reasonable effort.
10. The program is acceptable to the population served.
 - a. The program is culturally relevant to the population served.
 - b. Intervention is based on an empowerment model that emphasizes strengths and respects the participants needs and desires.
 - c. The level of attrition is reasonable.
11. Staff are provided sufficient time in terms of caseload size to form trusting relationships with program participants.
12. The program is consistently available.

(continued)

Elements of an Effective Prevention Program (continued)

Program Management

13. The program is efficiently managed.
 - a. Cost per unit of service is reasonable.
 - b. Program uses feedback evaluation, including feedback from participants, to improve the service delivery process and outcome.
 - c. Staff receive training appropriate to the level of skill required.
 - d. Staff receive ongoing administrative supervision.
 - e. Staff receive ongoing clinical supervision appropriate to the level of complexity of the intervention.
14. The program is provided with sufficient resources.
15. The program and staff are supported by state-level activities.
 - a. Policy, guidelines and procedures are available.
 - b. Technical assistance is provided.

***Editor's note:** For a prevention program to be effective, it must include participation from all sectors of the community. It must be based on sound research, theory and experience, and its must result in the desired outcomes. In addition, the program must be delivered consistently and managed efficiently.*



Principles and Tools for Planning for Emergencies

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

From: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, Washington, DC, 2013. http://rems.ed.gov/docs/rems_k-12_guide_508.pdf

The following principles are key to developing a comprehensive school emergency operations plan (school EOP) that addresses a range of threats and hazards:

Planning must be supported by leadership. At the district and school levels, senior-level officials can help the planning process by demonstrating strong support for the planning team.

Planning uses assessment to customize plans to the building level. Effective planning is built around comprehensive, ongoing assessment of the school community. Information gathered through assessment is used to customize plans to the building level, taking into consideration the school's unique circumstances and resources.

Planning considers all threats and hazards. The planning process must take into account a wide range of possible threats and hazards that may impact the school. Comprehensive school emergency management planning considers all threats and hazards throughout the planning process, addressing safety needs before, during, and after an incident.

Planning provides for the access and functional needs of the whole school community. The "whole school community" includes children, individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, those from religiously, racially, and ethnically diverse backgrounds, and people with limited English proficiency.

Planning considers all settings and all times. School EOPs must account for incidents that may occur during and outside the school day as well as on and off campus (e.g., sporting events, field trips).

Creating and revising a model emergency operations plan is done by following a collaborative process. This guide provides a process, plan format, and content guidance that are flexible enough for use by all school emergency planning teams. If a planning team also uses templates, it must first evaluate their usefulness to ensure the tools do not undermine the collaborative initiative and collectively shared plan. There are some jurisdictions that provide templates to schools, and these will reflect state and local mandates, as applicable

TOOL BOX

<http://rems.ed.gov/ToolBox.aspx>

The Tool Box is a virtual library of tools developed by school emergency managers in the field containing relevant resources pertinent to the needs of local education agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) and their partners as they engage in the process of school emergency management planning. The resources include sample drills, tabletops or other exercises; job descriptions; memorandums of understanding (MOU) with community partners; organizational charts; planning guidelines or sample policies; or school emergency management plans and their component tools and templates.

Youth Violence: Risk and Protective Factors

From: CDC – <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>

Risk Factors for the Perpetration of Youth Violence

Research on youth violence has increased our understanding of factors that make some populations more vulnerable to victimization and perpetration. Risk factors increase the likelihood that a young person will become violent. However, risk factors are not direct causes of youth violence; instead, risk factors contribute to youth violence^{1,2}

Research associates the following risk factors with perpetration of youth violence:²⁻⁴

Individual Risk Factors

- History of violent victimization
- Attention deficits, hyperactivity or learning disorders
- History of early aggressive behavior
- Involvement with drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- Low IQ
- Poor behavioral control
- Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities
- High emotional distress
- History of treatment for emotional problems
- Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
- Exposure to violence and conflict in the family

Family Risk Factors

- Authoritarian childrearing attitudes
- Harsh, lax or inconsistent disciplinary practices
- Low parental involvement
- Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers
- Low parental education and income
- Parental substance abuse or criminality
- Poor family functioning
- Poor monitoring and supervision of children

Peer and Social Risk Factors

- Association with delinquent peers
- Involvement in gangs
- Social rejection by peers
- Lack of involvement in conventional activities
- Poor academic performance
- Low commitment to school and school failure

Community Risk Factors

- Diminished economic opportunities
- High concentrations of poor residents
- High level of transiency
- High level of family disruption
- Low levels of community participation
- Socially disorganized neighborhoods

Protective Factors for the Perpetration of Youth Violence

Protective factors buffer young people from the risks of becoming violent. These factors exist at various levels. To date, protective factors have not been studied as extensively or rigorously as risk factors. However, identifying and understanding protective factors are equally as important as researching risk factors.

Most research is preliminary. Studies propose the following protective factors: ^{2,4,5}

Individual Protective Factors

- Intolerant attitude toward deviance
- High IQ
- High grade point average (as an indicator of high academic achievement)
- Positive social orientation
- Highly developed social skills/competencies
- Highly developed skills for realistic planning
- Religiosity

Family Protective Factors

- Connectedness to family or adults outside the family
- Ability to discuss problems with parents
- Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high
- Frequent shared activities with parents
- Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: When awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime or going to bed
- Involvement in social activities
- Parental / family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping)

Peer and Social Protective Factors

- Possession of affective relationships with those at school that are strong, close, and prosocially oriented
- Commitment to school (an investment in school and in doing well at school)
- Close relationships with non-deviant peers
- Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behavior
- Involvement in prosocial activities
- Exposure to school climates that characterized by:
 - >Intensive supervision
 - >Clear behavior rules
 - >Consistent negative reinforcement of aggression
 - >Engagement of parents and teachers

References

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- 3.Lipsey MW, Derzon JH. Predictors of violent and serious delinquency in adolescence and early adulthood: a synthesis of longitudinal research. In: Loeber R, Farrington DP, editors. Serious and violent juvenile offenders: risk factors and successful interventions. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications; 1998. p. 86-105.
- 4.Resnick MD, Ireland M, Borowsky I. Youth violence perpetration: what protects? What predicts? Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Journal of Adolescent Health 2004;35:424.e1-e10.
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INVOLVING PARENTS IN SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The following information is an excerpt from the National Center for School Safety document "School Safety Leadership Curriculum Guide" (for more information, contact 141 Duesenberg Drive, Suite 11; Westlake Village, CA 91362; 805-373-9977; <http://www.nssc1.org>)

...The presence of parents in the classroom, the library and the hallways subtly enhances school security...Within this range of activities, parents will find something that especially interests them:

- Help supervise the campus during "passing periods" and patrol parking lots before and after school
- Organize or join a safe school planning task force that will promote dialogue among multicultural groups
- Work with school personnel to incorporate a violence prevention curriculum and/or a peer mediation program
- Create a safe school corridor by volunteering to supervise walking routes to and from school
- Provide a "safe house" in the community
- Form a crew for special cleanup projects such as renovating old classrooms, repairing playground equipment, and removing graffiti
- Share special talents and information regarding career opportunities
- Organize fund-raisers to purchase items the school cannot afford
- Chaperone field trips and school events
- Provide clerical assistance
- Enhance special education classes by working as an extra aide

Safe Communities~Safe Schools Model fact sheet

A safe school plan is a framework for action that can be used as a guide for current and future planning. It addresses both the behavioral and property protection aspects of violence prevention. The goal of safe school planning is to create and maintain a positive and welcoming school climate, free of drugs, violence, intimidation, and fear—an environment in which teachers can teach and students can learn. Establishing a safe school plan is a long-term, systematic, and comprehensive process. As with most successful violence prevention interventions, the best safe school plan involves the entire community.

Components of a Safe School Plan

1. Convene a Safe School Planning Team

The planning team is the driving force behind the planning process and should consist of a variety of representatives from all aspects of the community including students (if age appropriate), parents, teachers, administrators, Board of Education members, government representatives, business representatives, religious leaders, law enforcement officials, etc.

2. Conduct a School Site Assessment

An annual school site assessment should be conducted and used as an evaluation and planning tool to determine the extent of any school safety problems and/or school climate issues.

3. Develop Strategies and Implement Violence Prevention Programs to Address School Safety Concerns

In an effort to meet the needs identified in the annual school site assessment, some strategies to consider are:

- >Establish a clear Code of Behavior that includes the rights and responsibilities of both adults and students within the school community.
- >Include all youth in positive, rewarding activities and relationships at school.
- >Review federal, state, and local statutes pertaining to student management and school order with the school district lawyer as well as review relevant school and district policies.
- >Control campus access and establish uniform visitor screening procedures.
- >Keep an accurate and detailed record of all school crime incidents.
- >Promote an ongoing relationship with local law enforcement authorities, local businesses, and other community organizations.
- >Provide a school or district hotline that can be accessed anonymously to report a threat or pending violent incident.
- >Establish guidelines and procedures for identifying students at risk of violence toward themselves or others. See The U.S. Department of Education's Early Warning Timely Response, A Guide to Safe Schools.
- >Identify effective violence prevention programs that meet the needs of the school community, including both in-school programs and community programs appropriate for referring students and families.

Examples include the following Blueprints for Violence Prevention Model and Promising programs:

- Life Skills Training
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
- Bullying Prevention Program
- Midwestern Prevention Program
- Quantum Opportunities
- School Transitional Environmental Program
- Project Status
- Positive Action Through Holistic Education
- Preventive Intervention
- Seattle Social Development
- Perry Preschool Program
- Iowa Strengthening Families Program
- Baltimore Mastery Learning & Good Behavior Game

4. Establish a Social Support Team

The purpose of this team is to help improve the social climate of the school. Members, including teachers, parents, students, counselors, mental health workers, and law enforcement provide information necessary to identify which students are at risk and the most appropriate support for that student.

5. Develop a Crisis Response Plan

In the event of a natural disaster or emergency at school, a crisis response plan outlines specific procedures for teachers and staff during various emergencies, including responding to a violent incident. Having a plan in place can save time and energy and can maintain commitment when unforeseen problems arise.

This is only a blueprint for a safe school plan. No two safe school plans are exactly the same. Each school community must identify its own needs and the strategies necessary to meet those needs. A safe school plan is not static; it is an ongoing process, created by multiple components. Whether the violence in your district is presently alarming or not, now is the time to institute a school/community-developed and implemented safe school plan to ensure a peaceful environment for children to grow and learn. Remember that the key to a safe school is creating a welcoming, friendly, supportive environment with clear guidelines for appropriate behavior that are enforced fairly and consistently.