Universal School-Based Prevention Programming and Peer Relationship Problems

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Presentation Outline

• Peer Victimization and Bullying

• Prevention Strategies

• WITS

• Recommendations for Educational Policy and Practice
Peer Victimization and Bullying

- Intentional, repetitive acts of aggression committed by one or more children against a physically or socially less powerful peer.
  - Physical, direct, overt harm
  - Verbal harm
  - Relational, social, indirect, covert harm

- Crick & Grot彼得, 1996; Olweus, 1993; Underwood, 2004
Frequency of Peer Victimization and Bullying

- Approximately **1 in 10 children** are persistently victimized by peers, with rates that range from **10-30%** in elementary and middle school.

  - Archer, 2004; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Pepler et al., 2004
Stability Over Time?

- **Physical** forms peak in **middle childhood**.

- **Relational** forms become more frequent in **late childhood** but are apparent as early as **preschool**.
  - Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Underwood, 2003

- Young children are **consistent** in their use.
  - Vaillancourt, Brendgen, Boivin, & Tremblay, 2003

- Episodes become more **chronic** for selected children in late childhood to early adolescence.
Cause for Concern?

- Consequences associated with chronic victimization are often severe or enduring.

- Potent risks for social-emotional and academic problems.

  - Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008; Graham & Juvonen, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rubin, Bukowski, Parker, & Bowker, 2008
Prevention Strategies
School-Based Preventive Strategies

- **Universal**
  - Curriculum to all youth
  - Primary prevention; prevent harm

- **Selected**
  - Intensive, tailored curriculum to high risk small groups or individuals
  - Secondary prevention; reduce harm or risk factors

- **Indicated**
  - Intensive, tailored curriculum to youth identified or diagnosed with specific problems
  - Tertiary prevention; reverse harm

- Greenberg et al., 1999
Prevention of Peer Victimization and Bullying

- Has attracted the attention of educators, policy-makers, and program developers.

- **Web-sites** marketing anti-bullying workshops and **schools** implementing anti-bullying programs have proliferated.
Prevention of Peer Victimization and Bullying

- While well-intentioned, few programs
  - have well-developed or articulated theories of change,
  - have been rigorously evaluated, and
  - assess fidelity of implementation
- Baldry & Farrington, 2007; Berger, 2007
Black Box of Prevention: Theory of Change

Prevention Program

Change Agents?
- Attitudes
- Adult supervision
- Social-cognitions

Targeted Outcomes
Prevention of Peer Victimization and Bullying

- The most commonly implemented and evaluated anti-bullying program is the school-wide *Olweus Bully Prevention Program*
  - Olweus, 1993, 2005

- Several more recent programs have sprung from Olweus’ approach
  - Steps to Respect
  - WITS

- **Program Focus**
  - Universal, school-wide program to reduce bullying.
  - Develop *school rules* against bullying.
  - Promote *teacher awareness* and *cooperative learning strategies*.

- **Training and Curriculum**
  - Train-the-trainer model.
  - School-, classroom-, and individual-level components.

- **Methods**
  - Comparison group evaluation.
  - 30 schools (grades 5-7).
  - Pre- and post-test.

- **Results**
  - Decreased bullying and antisocial behaviors.
  - Increased prosocial interactions, class climate, and attitudes toward school.
Steps to Respect (Frey et al., 2005)

- **Program Focus**
  - Universal, school-wide program to reduce bullying.
  - Increase **staff awareness** and **responsiveness**.
  - Foster **socially responsive beliefs** and **social-emotional skills**.

- **Training and Curriculum**
  - Teacher orientation.
  - 10 1-hour semi-scripted lessons.
  - Implementation fidelity ~90%

- **Methods**
  - Randomized control design.
  - 6 schools (grades 3-6)
  - Pre- and post-test.

- **Results**
  - Increased adult responsiveness, beliefs against bullying, and observed prosocial interactions.
  - Decreased bullying (observed) and victimization (self-reported).
WITS:  
Walk away,  
Ignore,  
Talk it out,  
Seek help
WITS Rock Solid Program
(Leadbeater, Hoglund, & Woods, 2003)

• **Program Focus**
  ▫ Universal, school-wide program to prevent victimization.
  ▫ Foster **adult responsiveness**.
  ▫ Promote developmentally appropriate **strategies to deal with bullying**.

• **Training and Curriculum**
  ▫ Teacher orientation.
  ▫ Embedded in **language arts curriculum**.
  ▫ Messages reinforced by school personnel and community-based police officers and athletes.

  ▫ [www.youth.society.uvic.ca](http://www.youth.society.uvic.ca) or [www.rocksolid.bc.ca](http://www.rocksolid.bc.ca)
WITS Evaluation: Design & Participants

- **WITS Design**
  - 3-year comparison group evaluation
  - 11 intervention schools, 6 comparison schools
    - low- and high-poverty schools
- **3-years and 4 waves of data**
  - Year 1 = fall & spring of 1\textsuperscript{st} grade
  - Year 2 = spring of 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade
  - Year 3 = spring of 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade
- **432 children**
  - 49% girls, mean age = 6.1 years at baseline
  - 73% White, 13% Asian, 7% Aboriginal, and 5% other
  - family SES risks (no risks = 49.8%; 1-4 risks = 50.2%)
Measures: Victimization & Bullying

• Physical and Relational Victimization
  ▫ Child-reports
  ▫ 5 items per subscale; 3-point scale
    • “How often has another kid pushed, shoved or hit you?”
    • “How often has another kid left you out on purpose?”
      • Social Experiences Questionnaire (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996)

• Physical Bullying/Aggression
  ▫ Teacher-reports
  ▫ 3 items; 4-point scale
    • “How often does this child kick other children?”
      • Early School Behavior Rating Scale (Caldwell & Pianta, 1991)
Physical Victimization: WITS vs. Control Schools

![Graph showing the comparison of physical victimization in WITS vs. Control Schools over time. The graph plots physical victimization against time, with distinct lines for Control Schools and WITS Schools.]
Relational Victimization: WITS vs. Control Schools

![Graph showing the comparison between Control Schools and WITS Schools over time. The graph plots relational victimization against time, with lines indicating the trend for each group.](image)
Physical Bullying: WITS vs. Control Schools

![Graph showing the comparison between Control Schools and WITS Schools over time. The graph indicates a linear increase in physical bullying over time for both groups, with the WITS Schools showing a lower rate of increase compared to the Control Schools.]
Summary and Limitations of WITS

- Promise of a universal, school-wide approach to reduce peer victimization and bullying.
- What are the mechanisms of change?
- Implementation fidelity?
- Causality?
- Generalizable?
Recommendations for Educational Policy and Practice
Conflict Resolution Programming

- Can established anti-violence and conflict resolution programs that target aggression and violence also reduce risks for peer victimization and bullying?
  - “because LIFT is so effective in reducing aggression, it no doubt is effective in reducing bullying as well.”
  - Fight Crime, Invest in Kids (2001, p. 11)
Recommendations

• Support developmentally appropriate prevention programs with well-developed theories of change.

• Support prevention programs that target diverse forms of peer problems in the early grades when these problems may be most amenable to change.
Recommendations

• Universal, school- or classroom-wide programs that
  ▫ target multiple outcomes,
  ▫ are paired with selected components, and
  ▫ involve parents and community groups.

• Demand rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of these programs and evidence of treatment fidelity.